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Chairman: Mr. Olhaye ..... (Djibouti)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 100: Environment and sustainable development (A/54/25 and Add.1, A/54/80, A/54/98, A/54/212; A/C.2/54/5)

(c) Convention on Biological Diversity (A/54/428)

(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind

(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa (A/54/96)

(f) Implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/C.2/54/4)

1. **Mr. Diallo** (Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa), speaking on agenda item 100(e), reviewed the main new developments relating to implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification. At the second session of the Conference of the Parties held in Dakar (Senegal) from 30 November to 11 December 1998, important decisions had been taken on communications procedures and consideration of the implementation of the Convention. Decisions had also been taken regarding the budget and programme of the Convention secretariat for 1999, the operation of the Global Mechanism and cooperation with the other conventions dealing with sustainable development. It was also worth noting that important events had been organized in parallel with the Conference, including the first international round table of parliamentarians on the subject of desertification, which had led to the adoption of a declaration.

2. While activities to implement the Convention continued a considerable number of countries had acceded to or ratified the Convention. The tally, to date, was 159 ratifications and accessions. Countries which had not yet ratified the instrument were invited to take the requisite steps to do so.

3. Seizing the opportunity offered by the first session of the General Assembly following the establishment in Bonn of the permanent secretariat of the Convention, he once again expressed his gratitude to the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany for its assistance and to the German people for its warm welcome and hospitality.

4. In anticipation of the third session of the Conference of the Parties, to be held from 15 to 26 November 1999 in Recife, Brazil, the secretariat had facilitated the holding of a number of regional dialogues which had enabled developing countries affected by desertification to take stock of the process of implementation of the Convention and, if need be, to establish guidelines and to harmonize their positions. He wished to emphasize that the African countries were very well prepared: 41 national reports had been sent in to the Convention secretariat, which would be submitting them to the Conference. That number — which had rarely been equalled in a multilateral process of that nature — was evidence of the importance countries attached to the Convention. He was certain that the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and the countries of the Asian region would produce just as many national reports when it came to organizing the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties.

5. A headquarters agreement had recently been signed between the Brazilian Government and the Convention secretariat. In that connection, he wished to acknowledge the spirit of cooperation shown by the Brazilian Government. No effort had been spared to ensure that preparations for the third session of the Conference of the Parties proceeded smoothly.

6. The attention of delegations was drawn to the decision referred to in section IV of the report of the Secretary-General (A/54/96), which called on the General Assembly to decide to finance from the regular programme budget of the United Nations the conference-servicing costs arising from sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies. That proposal was modelled on the arrangement made with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The General Assembly was therefore requested to include in the budget and calendar of conferences and meetings for the biennium 2000-2001 the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, as it had done for the biennium 1998-1999.

7. **Mr. Zedan** (Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity) recalled that the Conference of the Parties to the Convention had been unable, as yet, to conclude the negotiations on a biosafety protocol; it had therefore decided to suspend its first extraordinary meeting to enable the Parties and Governments to hold informal consultations on the outstanding issues. At those consultations progress had been made on several key points, in particular regarding the scope of the protocol, how commodities should be dealt with under the protocol and the relationship between the protocol and the existing corpus of international law. The extraordinary meeting was to be

resumed from 24 to 28 January 2000 in Montreal and would be preceded by consultations beginning on 20 January 2000. The successful conclusion of those negotiations would represent important progress towards achieving sustainable development because the protocol in question represented a critical attempt to address environmental and developmental concerns regarding a new technology.

8. The Convention's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice had held its fourth meeting in June 1999, in Montreal. It had made seven recommendations to the Conference of the Parties. One of them, which had already had considerable impact, dealt with genetic use restriction technologies. The Subsidiary Body had concluded that further research and study was required in order adequately to understand the impact of the new technologies on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. It had also recommended that the Parties should not approve such technologies for field testing until scientific data was available that could justify such testing, and that they should not approve their commercial use until adequate scientific assessments had been carried out. The Subsidiary Body had also requested the Executive Secretary to prepare for the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties a detailed proposal to address the issues of peer review and scientific assessments for the Convention, drawing on the lessons learned from implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

9. During the inter-sessional meeting on the operations of the Convention, the participants had drawn up a recommendation containing elements of a decision on rationalizing the conduct of meetings of the Conference of the Parties, a strategic plan for the Convention and ways of improving the operation of the Subsidiary Body. The participants had also considered issues relating to access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing and the relationship between intellectual property rights and relevant provisions of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. The Panel of Experts on Access and Benefit-Sharing had met in Costa Rica at the beginning of October and had adopted a series of agreed conclusions on a variety of issues.

10. Cooperation with other processes was an issue of crucial concern to the General Assembly and the parties to the Convention. In that context, the Conference of the Parties had adopted a joint work plan for the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfront Habitat. The report in document A/54/428 gave other examples of cooperation. At its next meeting, the Conference would consider its fifth thematically focused programme of work, which dealt with the biological diversity of dryland ecosystems. At its fourth meeting, the Subsidiary Body had requested the Executive Secretary to prepare for its fifth meeting, in consultation with the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, a draft programme of work for the biome. The results of that consultation would provide a basis on which to explore the modalities of real cooperation with respect to the implementation of the two conventions. The Subsidiary Body would take up that programme of work at its fifth meeting, in early 2000. After that, the Ad Hoc Working Group on Article 8 (j) of the Convention would meet for the first time in Seville (Spain) in February. The results of its work would be particularly important in the light of the recommendation adopted by the Subsidiary Body, which called for consideration of the interests of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles to be included in the consideration of each of the topics in its programme of work.

11. **Mr. Talbot** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that those States reaffirmed their commitment to the achievement of sustainable development and the implementation of Agenda 21, while recalling the need for genuine partnership between developed and developing countries to achieve the objectives established in that context. The Group of 77 and China attached great importance to the Convention on Biological Diversity. They welcomed the establishment of the Panel of Experts on Access and Benefit-Sharing and the continuation of the work to rationalize activities linked with the Convention. The Panel of Experts could help remedy a serious deficiency of most developing countries in terms of the capacity to formulate modalities with respect to access to genetic resources and the sharing of benefits.

12. The Group of 77 and China also recognized the importance of the adoption of a protocol on biosafety. Concerns regarding aspects relevant to health and development had stymied efforts on previous occasions, but the Group of 77 and China hoped that the parties could reach agreement after the resumed session of the extraordinary meeting in January 2000.

13. With regard to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the number of accessions and ratifications of the Kyoto Protocol was still small. Meanwhile, carbon dioxide emissions and greenhouse gases continued to have a profound impact on the world's climate systems, particularly on small island developing States,

which were directly threatened by the dangers of rises in sea levels. Needless to say those phenomena posed grave risks for sustainable development. The Group of 77 and China therefore strongly urged Member States which had not yet done so, in particular the parties envisaged in annex I, to accede to the Kyoto Protocol or to ratify it as soon as possible. They also stressed that the ratification of the Protocol should not be subject to new conditions imposed on developing countries with regard to the reduction of greenhouse gases.

14. On the subject of combatting desertification, the efforts made by the international community in that sphere were insufficient. The limited progress made so far in the implementation of the Convention had been accomplished largely with the already extremely inadequate resources of the affected countries themselves. Higher priority must therefore be accorded to the Convention, particularly through greater collaboration between the Convention secretariat and the Global Mechanism and increased financial, scientific and technical support for its implementation. In that context, the Group of 77 and China looked forward to the outcome of the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

15. The review of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States had pointed to the need for stronger international support for the efforts made by the States in question to promote sustainable development, given the vulnerability of their economies and the fragility of their ecosystems. The Group of 77 and China therefore called on the international community to assist those States in improving competitiveness and market access, encouraging the diversification of exports, and mobilizing new resources in order to implement the Barbados Programme of Action. In that regard, they stressed the continuing necessity for capacity-building and for the strengthening of institutions to deal with the cross-sectoral issues of sustainable development.

16. The Caribbean region and sea possessed a number of unique features which justified according them priority attention: exceptional biological diversity, highly fragile ecosystems and heavy reliance by most of the countries of the region on the coastal land and marine environment in order to achieve sustainable development. In addition, those countries were continuing to fall victim to natural disasters which undermined their development efforts. In the context of the special session of the General Assembly on the review of the Barbados Programme of Action, the Group of 77 and China had submitted a draft resolution on the question; they hoped that the text would be considered in greater depth during the Committee's deliberations.

17. **Ms. Rasi** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, aligned themselves with her statement.

18. The European Union attached great importance to the commitments made by all countries and major groups to the implementation of the principles of the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21; it believed that the enhancement of public awareness was essential and engaged in continuous dialogue with civil society on environmental matters.

19. With regard to the Rio Conventions, the European Union believed that the conferences of the parties of the three instruments should consider the substantive issues within their remit. The General Assembly, for its part, should consider any operational decisions which it needed to take in order to enable the convention secretariats and the conferences of the parties to work effectively, and should also look into issues which were common to those instruments, such as those relating to coordination among them. It would therefore make sense to have a single resolution which covered all three conventions.

20. The negotiations to develop a biosafety protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity, setting out appropriate procedures, including an advance informed agreement procedure, had started in 1996. The European Union believed that those negotiations should be concluded at the resumption of the first extraordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in early 2000; a decision on an interim arrangement, pending the entry into force of the protocol, could be taken then as well.

21. The European Union supported the work carried out, at its fourth meeting, by the Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice in many important fields, including the development of guiding principles for the prevention of impacts of alien species and the sustainable use of biological diversity. That body was continuing to provide valuable scientific input to the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

22. All member States of the European Union had signed the Kyoto Protocol in 1998 and had started to implement it. At Kyoto, the European Union had committed itself to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 8 per cent. The adoption of the Protocol had increased the level of interest in the Kyoto mechanisms.

23. The European Union supported capacity-building in developing countries in order for them to participate fully in the international debate related to climate issues. In that regard, the entire development cooperation portfolio of the European Union was subject to environmental impact assessment.

24. The Global Environment Facility played an important role by facilitating climate-friendly technologies in developing countries. It was important to involve all stakeholders in that area and to secure strong commitments by governments and relevant organizations. The establishment of a suitable policy framework was also extremely important for the adoption and use of alternative energy models and energy efficient technologies in developing countries.

25. The European Union noted that 1999 had been a year of change for the secretariats of the Convention to Combat Desertification, which now had a permanent status and had been moved to Bonn. It welcomed the entry into operation of the Global Mechanism.

26. The third session of the Conference of the Parties in Recife, Brazil, would consider the reports by African countries on their experiences in implementing the Convention, as well as the reports of donors on the assistance they had provided. The European Union hoped that that consideration would lead to useful lessons related to the implementation of the Convention at the local and national levels.

27. The Conference of the Parties would also consider the medium-term strategy of the secretariat and the first operational strategy of the global mechanism. As the Secretary-General had noted in his report (A/54/96), the Convention secretariat and the Global Mechanism should cooperate in order to avoid duplication and overlapping of their activities.

28. Since the focus of implementing the Convention was at the country level, it was essential to establish a network of national focal points, which should be designated by their governments. The implementation of that instrument required the integration of its goals and objectives into national planning processes. Desertification and drought were also cross-sectoral issues which required an integrated approach.

29. **Mr. Isakov** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation attached importance to the implementation of the major United Nations conventions relating to the protection of the environment, as well as the recommendations of the Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. He welcomed the fact that, on the whole, the scope of application of the Convention on Biological Diversity was being gradually expanded, as demonstrated by the decisions adopted at the different meetings mentioned in document A/54/428. The Convention must now go through a difficult stage in its development in order to achieve one of its main goals, namely, ensure that the benefits flowing from the exploitation of genetic resources were shared equitably. His delegation believed that the work that had been done in that regard was positive. In that regard, it shared the views of other countries and called for a global and balanced approach to the implementation of the decisions adopted by the Fourth Conference of the Parties. It also welcomed efforts aimed at including the Convention in the reform of United Nations activities in the sphere of environmental protection, especially arrangements that contributed to strengthening cooperation with other bodies. One of the priority tasks in coming months should be to finish work on the drafting of a protocol on biosafety.

30. The Russian Federation continued to honour its commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It had reduced the volume of greenhouse gases to a level well below that of 1990, and intended to fully meet its obligations under the Kyoto Protocol. The achievements of the goals under that Protocol would depend to a large extent on the results of efforts to establish optimal parameters concerning modalities for its implementation. Given the very tight deadlines that had been set for determining such parameters and taking fundamental decisions, the fifth Conference of the Parties, which had just opened in Bonn, was of great importance. In that regard, priority should continue to be given to the establishment of an international emission trading scheme for greenhouse gases, which must be based on the principle of voluntary participation and must recognize the right of every State to freely determine whether it wanted to accumulate the unused rights for use at a future date or whether to sell and/or use them to attract foreign investment.

31. The United Nations Convention on Desertification was the only international instrument relating to efforts to combat desertification and soil degradation worldwide. His delegation was satisfied with the results of the second session of the Conference of the Parties and wished to reaffirm its desire to accede to that universal instrument and to participate in the constructive work carried out in that context as a fully-fledged Party to the Convention. His delegation based its action in that regard on the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 53/191. It hoped that the additional regional implementation annex, which had been elaborated for countries of Central and Eastern Europe,

would be adopted. That would speed up the process of accession to the Convention for the Russian Federation and other interested countries of Central and Eastern Europe that were currently participating in the work of the Convention as observers. The work on the fifth annex was already yielding results. Thus far, six countries from the region were parties to the Convention.

32. In conformity with the provisions of the Convention, efforts were under way in his country, to prepare and implement at the regional level plans of action to combat drought, soil degradation and desertification. It was planned to eventually adopt a corresponding federation-wide programme.

33. **Mr. Özügerin** (Turkey) said that his Government had not acceded to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change because it was included in the list of countries in Annexes I and II. He asked delegations for their help in having Turkey's name removed from the Annexes so that it could accede to the Convention.

34. Those Annexes included countries which had completed their industrialization process as well as the economies in transition. The inclusion of Turkey created responsibilities that it should not currently be asked to undertake. The Annexes as currently formulated did not reflect the levels of development and responsibility for emissions of all countries. That weakness made it difficult to implement the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. Although not a party to the Convention, his Government was aware of its responsibilities and fully shared the concern of the global community regarding climate change. The necessary legislative steps had been taken to reduce emission levels. Turkey continued to contribute to the Global Environment Facility as required by Annex II and had also made significant financial contributions to developing countries.

35. The matter of Turkey's exclusion from the Annexes of the Framework Convention on Climate Change had been taken up at the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties in Buenos Aires in 1998; discussions would resume shortly at the fifth session which was meeting in Bonn.

36. His delegation believed that commitments should be based on fairness and take duly into account the differentiated responsibilities and individual circumstances of the Parties concerned.

37. **Ms. Viotti** (Brazil) said her Government would soon host, in Recife, the third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and reaffirmed her delegations commitment to international efforts to overcome the problem of desertification and drought, which affected approximately one billion people. She hoped that the meeting would call attention to the seriousness of the problem and to the need for adequate action.

38. The phenomenon of desertification affected approximately 11 per cent of Brazil, mainly in the north-eastern region. It caused loss of biodiversity, compromised the availability of water resources and provoked huge migratory flows which aggravated social problems in urban areas. Her Government was committed to implementing a national plan to combat desertification. It had started an awareness campaign on the causes and effects of desertification and had also fostered actions to promote international cooperation in that area. In 1998, Brazil had hosted the first Africa, Latin America and Caribbean forum on the implementation of the Convention during which a platform for interregional cooperation between Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean had been adopted, which would serve as the framework for cooperation between Governments, academia and non-governmental organizations of both continents. The second forum would be held in Mali in 2000.

39. Given its wide-ranging consequences, desertification could not be considered a local or regional problem; the fight against desertification required coordinated efforts and international cooperation. Her delegation hoped that implementation of the Convention would reduce losses and prevent the damage caused by desertification in many regions of the world.

40. In order to fulfil those objectives, the Secretariat must receive the support of the States Parties to the Convention. It was also essential that developed countries take the necessary steps to transfer environmentally sound technologies and provide adequate financial support to the affected developing countries.

41. **Mr. Kolby** (Norway), with regard to the issue of climate change, said that it was essential to step up the momentum created by the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol in the context of the Conference of the Parties which was meeting in Bonn. Efforts must be focused on the development of guidelines and rules for the implementation of the flexibility mechanisms. It was also important to adhere to the time-frame decided upon in Buenos Aires so that the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties could take decisions that would pave the way for ratification of the Protocol.

42. The experience of Activities Implemented Jointly (AIJ) had been largely positive, but capacity and competence-building must continue. The transition towards the Clean Development Mechanism was of vital importance for emission reductions and for the transfer of technology to developing countries. Cooperation between the developed and developing countries, based on their common but differentiated responsibilities, was essential for the Kyoto Protocol to succeed. The developed countries must also make every effort to reduce their emissions in accordance with the requirements of the Protocol.

43. The degradation of productive land, which was an issue of great concern, and food insecurity, were closely linked to the problem of poverty. The world community must follow up the Convention to Combat Desertification and States must meet the target of providing 0.7 per cent of GDP for official development assistance (ODA). The poorest countries, particularly in Africa, must continue to receive international assistance in order to combat desertification effectively. The greater part of the assistance provided by Norway was allocated to sub-Saharan Africa.

44. In order to improve the dialogue between policy makers and scientists, Norway had suggested that a scientific assessment mechanism be developed under the Convention on Biological Diversity. His delegation also believed that a mechanism to assess the status of implementation of the Convention at the national level was needed.

45. The recommendations from the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests to be held in 2000 should be of interest to the continuing work of the Convention. His delegation also attached great importance to the successful conclusion of negotiations on a Protocol on biosafety.

46. The General Assembly had recently held a special session to review the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. That session had shown that those countries were participating actively in the implementation of Agenda 21 in their own development. Norway had implemented a special plan of action for the small island developing States. In that context it had worked in close collaboration with the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). The latter made practically no contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and sea-level rise yet they were likely to suffer the most from the effects of climate change. Their particular vulnerability underlined the urgency of dealing effectively with the problem of climate change.

47. **Mr. Abreha** (Ethiopia) recalled that the hazards posed by genetic engineering to health and to the environment, in particular to the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources, had prompted a call for a legally binding international protocol on biosafety. More than two years of negotiations had produced a draft text which sought to regulate the international movement of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), but the parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity had been unable to adopt the text because six countries which were the main producers of genetically modified organisms had blocked the inclusion in the protocol of any provision which they perceived could hamper trade in GMOs and products derived from such organisms.

48. The release of GMOs into the environment was of particular concern. The developing countries which were the source of most genetic materials, were concerned that cross-pollination might take place between genetically engineered crops and non-genetically engineered varieties and that that might jeopardize biological resource conservation efforts, undermine food security and hinder the process of sustainable development.

49. For those reasons and as a country that had contributed, on behalf of the African countries, to the preparation of the negotiating text on the protocol, his delegation reaffirmed that the protocol should assess the hazards posed by all GMOs; that it should include a "precautionary principle" that would allow countries to reject GMOs and products derived therefrom if there was no scientific certainty as to their safety; that it should recognize the sovereign right of countries to refuse the import of GMOs and products derived therefrom and ensure the application of prior informed consent; that it should allow countries to take stricter measures to safeguard the environment and human health; that it should take into account the impact of GMOs on socio-economic activities and on human health; and that it should not be made subordinate to other international instruments which promoted free trade regardless of environmental and health concerns.

50. The developing countries were also concerned by certain provisions of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights relating to trade in biological resources, because of the adverse impact on food security, the environment and human health. Equally important causes of concern were abuses of intellectual property rights by transnational corporations which were patenting biological resources of developing countries without recognizing community rights and without benefit sharing.

51. In 1998, the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity had recommended that member States

should adopt a draft model legislation on access to biological resources at national level; initiate a process of negotiation among African countries to adopt an African convention on biological diversity; and develop a common position to safeguard their sovereign rights and the vital interests of local communities.

52. The African countries were also threatened by drought and desertification, which phenomena, coupled with anthropogenic effects, exacerbated the menace of famine and helped increase the number of environmental refugees. In order to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought, Ethiopia had designed a conservation strategy and in that context had formulated a national action programme to combat desertification; the success of that programme would depend on the financial and technical support provided by the international community.

53. It was to be hoped that the developed countries, international financial institutions and other organizations would make appropriate contributions to the Convention's Global Mechanism so as to enable affected countries to combat desertification, mitigate the effects of drought and bring about sustainable development.

54. **Ms. Bai Yongjie** (China) said that in the context of negotiations on climate change, it was important to respect the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities. Developed countries, which were responsible for the bulk of greenhouse gas emissions, should be the first to take steps to reduce those emissions. The developing countries, whose per capita emissions were relatively low, should have as their primary task to develop their economy and to fight poverty, as stipulated in the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

55. Given the length of its coastline and lowlands, China was particularly affected by climate change and sea-level rise. The efforts it was making in that regard were being hindered by the state of development of its economy which was depriving it of the capacity needed to make serious commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, as a State Party to the Framework Convention, China had adopted a series of measures, in line with its sustainable development strategy, designed to slow population growth and to improve energy efficiency and structure.

56. China hoped that the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention would encourage the developed countries to assume their responsibilities and adopt a more open attitude towards the developing countries. It supported the efforts which were being made to prepare a clean development mechanism as such. Furthermore, with regard to exchanges of emission rights between developed countries, it believed that regulations should be prepared in accordance with the Kyoto Protocol.

57. The Convention to Combat Desertification had provided the international community with the necessary legal framework to combat the effects of desertification and drought which were threatening food security and hindering sustainable development. The developing countries must first of all make a larger contribution to the implementation of the Convention. China, for its part, had respected its commitments and adopted a series of measures designed to reduce the effects of natural disasters, including sandstorms.

58. Since the entry into force of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the international community had worked towards protecting and utilizing biological diversity with uneven success. The developing countries were handicapped by their lack of resources, technology and capacity, a situation which it was essential to remedy. Her Government attached great importance to the negotiations on the protocol on biosafety and hoped that they would be completed as early as possible.

59. With regard to the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, a review five years later of the implementation of the outcome revealed a gap between the provisions and the execution of the Programme of Action. Accordingly, the international community must unite its efforts to put into effect the consensus achieved at the Conference, a process to which her Government undertook to contribute actively.

60. **Mr. Aho-Glele** (Benin) said that the eradication of poverty, especially in developing countries, was a vital task for the United Nations and one of the approaches adopted was combating desertification. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification highlighted the links between desertification and poverty and stressed the need to combat desertification, which was recognized as being of global concern and requiring worldwide and concerted solutions.

61. After commending the initiatives taken since the entry into force of the Convention, he stated that, like other conventions which had emanated from the Rio Summit, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on desertification prescribed differentiated obligations according to the categories to which the actors belonged, with responsibilities established at the level of developed countries, the Global Mechanism and developing countries affected by desertification.

62. Under the Convention, the developed countries were expected to contribute financial resources and other forms of assistance to developing countries affected by desertification. However, that assistance had not materialized, nor had the genuine partnership which would carry out the comprehensive measures envisaged. While some of the developed countries had made commendable efforts, others had yet to render assistance at the level envisaged in the international commitments.

63. The Global Mechanism, which had been established to facilitate the mobilization and channelling of financial resources to developing countries affected by desertification, had not begun to function until January 1999 and had not yet put in place all the necessary administrative personnel. It had therefore been unable to respond to developing countries' requests for assistance in drawing up country reports and programmes of action. Those in charge of the Global Mechanism should take steps to remedy that situation.

64. Benin belonged to the category of developing countries affected by desertification. Within the framework of the Convention, it had established a national committee to combat desertification and was to establish a national fund for that purpose. It had prepared its country report and adopted a preliminary draft national programme of action, thanks to assistance provided by UNDP, the United Nations Office for the Sudano-Sahelian Region and the Convention secretariat. In order to carry out its national programme of action, Benin was awaiting financial resources and genuine support from the Global Mechanism, and he trusted that the third Conference of the Parties (Recife, Brazil) would be the trigger for the initiation of national plans of action and thus the true starting point of strengthened action to combat desertification.

65. **Ms. Rohana** (Malaysia), said that her delegation had repeatedly advocated that environmental problems and sustainable development should be dealt with in a broader context with a view to tackling the root causes of poverty. Clearly, development and economic growth must accelerate to eradicate poverty; but it was also necessary to ensure that the emphasis was on environment-friendly sustainable development. The relationship between the environment and mankind had been discussed at Rio, where it had been recognized that States had common but differentiated responsibilities and that sustainable development required adequate scientific, technical and financial resources. Seven years later, on the eve of the new century, progress was mixed in terms both of commitments and achievements.

66. Regrettably, the United Nations system continued to face constraints already addressed in earlier sustainable development efforts, including lack of financial and human resources, lack of institutional capacity, and vague mandates and roles of agencies, as mentioned by the Secretary-General in his report (A/54/131). It was to be hoped that the effort to achieve a more coordinated approach to the follow-up to major United Nations conferences would create the necessary synergies and ensure a more efficient use of limited resources.

67. In the area of sustainable development, the Secretary-General rightly stated in his report (A/54/131) that education, public awareness and training needed to be the integral components of national strategies and plans. Her delegation awaited with interest the results of the survey undertaken by UNESCO in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNDP to determine whether adequate attention was being paid to education in national strategies and plans. Her Government was conducting various environmental education and training programmes for both students and teachers and was carrying out public awareness activities emphasizing environmental values, in cooperation with NGOs and the private sector. Consistent with its goal of sustainable and balanced development, as envisaged in Agenda 21, it had taken steps to ensure that environmental and social considerations were not neglected. It had adopted in its development planning a comprehensive approach which took into account the population's socio-economic needs and enhancement of the quality of life through improvements in productivity and the protection of the natural environment. A combination of legislative and innovative economic instruments had been adopted to encourage the development of environmentally sound technologies and environment-friendly products.

68. Malaysia was one of 12 countries which held between 60 per cent and 70 per cent of the world's biological diversity. Because of that rich natural heritage, it had taken various conservation measures as part of its national policy on biological diversity, initiated in 1988. That policy, which was based on the rationale that biological diversity was a cross-sectoral issue, would help to ensure that rapid national development was sustainable and environmentally sound and that Malaysia would be transformed into a world centre of excellence in conservation, research and utilization of biological diversity. His Government supported the idea of a biosafety protocol, which should be drafted in strong terms and should lay down the conditions for dealing with modified living organisms, account being taken of health factors, socio-economic considerations and biological diversity.

69. **Mr. Lewis** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the countries of the Alliance of Small Island States

(AOSIS) Members of the United Nations, said, with regard to biological diversity, that small islands were home to some of the most unique and diverse plant and animal species on the planet. Sadly, though, that biological diversity was also among the most threatened in the world. Population and development pressures, the introduction of foreign genetic resources, and the devastating effects of natural disasters ranked among the major causes. In small island States, severe natural disasters had a greater proportional impact on biodiversity than elsewhere because of the smaller population sizes and narrow habitat ranges of many local species.

70. The Convention on Biological Diversity was therefore of vital importance to small island developing States, which had been among the first States to ratify the Convention, along with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Island nations had prepared national biodiversity plans and strategies, as in the case of the Bahamas, whose Biodiversity Data Management Plan had been highlighted as a success by the United Nations in a recent report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.17/1999/6/Add.5). Such initiatives had benefited from the active engagement of island communities and the use of traditional knowledge in the conservation of ecosystems, and the United Nations system had also played a key role by assisting small islands in cataloguing and preserving their biodiversity, most especially in the forestry sector. However, although much had been done, the international community was far from making the kind of progress needed to ensure a healthy and stable living environment for future generations. Every year, small islands lost more of their beauty and diversity; hence the importance of the addendum on biodiversity resources in small island developing States (E/CN.17/1999/6/Add.5) to the report of the Secretary-General on progress in the implementation of the programme of action for the sustainable development of small island developing States, which outlined priorities for future action. With respect to such priorities, the member countries of AOSIS joined the Secretary-General in his call for international support to small island developing States, especially for their efforts to protect native species and their habitats, to control alien invasive species, and to implement relevant international conventions.

71. Referring to the report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (A/54/428, annex), he said that the members of AOSIS were pleased that the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical, and Technological Advice had adopted a number of recommendations in preparation for the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in May 2000, on, *inter alia*, the Global Taxonomy Initiative; conservation and sustainable use of terrestrial biodiversity; and the development of approaches and practices for the sustainable use of biological resources, including tourism. On the other hand, they wished to express their profound disappointment at the lack of progress to date in the negotiations for a protocol on biosafety, owing largely to the intransigence of a small group of countries. In accordance with article 19 of the Convention, there was an urgent need to consider modalities for advance informed agreement outlining appropriate procedures in the field of safe transfer, handling and use of any a living modified organism resulting from biotechnology that might have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. Although there had been six meetings of the ad hoc working group established to negotiate the protocol, as well as an extraordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties, other aspects of the protocol remained unresolved, for example: handling, transport, packaging and identification; socio-economic considerations; and the relationship of the protocol with other international agreements. With the resumed session of the extraordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties scheduled for January 2000, island populations continued to have grave concerns about the potential adverse effects of food produced from genetically modified organisms on their health.

72. Some small islands had already disappeared beneath the waves; should current climate trends continue, such archipelagos as Maldives and Seychelles would see 70-80 per cent of their atolls sink into the ocean. Island States were the most exposed to the effects of climate change, which were a threat to their very survival. They had therefore repeatedly called for international action and, in particular, urged developed countries to cut back on their use of fossil fuels that heated the atmosphere. They were gravely concerned at the slow pace of ratification of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, particularly since none of the 37 industrialized countries that were required to start cutting greenhouse gases in 2008 were among the ratifiers. AOSIS urged States Members of the United Nations that had not yet ratified the Protocol to do so promptly. Another process that States must focus on was the Fifth Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change; that important session currently taking place in Bonn would be an important milestone on the road to implementation of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action. However, it was important to strike a balance between issues related to the Framework Convention and those under the Kyoto Protocol.

73. On the subject of desertification, he said that the members of AOSIS wished to highlight the importance of the Convention to combat drought and desertification; they recognized the magnitude of the problem, as well as the potential benefits of full participation in the Convention process. In protecting the planet's climate and preserving biological diversity, the international community must also address issues of soil degradation, erosion and salinization, which were all primary concerns to small island States. AOSIS would like to commend the Convention's Committee on Science and Technology for its work on benchmarks and indicators and for its consideration of an early warning system for land degradation, at the upcoming fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Recife, Brazil.

74. Referring to the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, he said that the Conference had been a historic moment, as had the recent special session of the General Assembly for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. As a result, there was now a profound understanding of the ecological and economic challenges being faced by island nations and there was every prospect for successful implementation of the Programme of Action. In that context, AOSIS wished to express its appreciation for the initiatives taken by a number of countries, particularly for the support provided by Norway to the Small Island Developing States unit of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs; by Norway and Italy to the Small Island Developing States Network (SIDSNET); by the United States to AOSIS, for the projects submitted for donor consideration by small island developing states; and by Singapore, for technical training activities in sectors linked to the Barbados Programme of Action. Although small island States must emphasize self-reliance, they needed assistance from the international community in order to face forces well beyond their control.

75. Referring to the draft resolution annexed to document A/C.2/54/4, he said that the members of AOSIS had been disappointed that the General Assembly had been unable to adopt a draft resolution calling for the designation of the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development; it was crucial to establish a regime for the protection of the Caribbean Sea and the sustainable development of its coastal and marine resources.

76. **Mr. Valdivieso** (Colombia) said that owing to the magnitude and urgency of the needs of all countries in the economic, social and environmental fields, the measures taken by the United Nations system to speed up implementation of Agenda 21 had not yielded satisfactory results. Even though it was true that primary responsibility for the implementation of Agenda 21 lay with each individual country, it was also true that international cooperation was an important complementary factor in taking advantage of the real benefits of sustainable development. It was a matter of concern to his delegation that the United Nations system was experiencing difficulties in promoting more effective coordination in the field in question. In particular, the shortage of financial and human resources was having an adverse effect on the implementation of programmes and projects in areas of major importance. At the same time, the lack of coordination between the different bodies and agencies was resulting in the loss of scarce resources.

77. The second review of the implementation of Agenda 21, to be held in 2002, would have to bring more substantive results than those obtained during the first review, in 1997. In that connection, it was important that the preparatory process should begin as soon as possible and that the necessary documentation should be available to allow for an adequate analysis. The mobilization of new and additional resources and their effective assignment, as well as the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, were among the areas that should receive priority attention.

78. The Commission on Sustainable Development, as the intergovernmental body responsible for the follow-up to Agenda 21, played a central role in the promotion of sustainable development. At its eighth session, in 2000, it would have to consider topics that were currently the focus of attention of the international community.

79. Land resources, agriculture, finance, trade and investment were obviously questions of great importance in the elaboration of a world strategy for sustainable development. The discussion of those topics would offer an unprecedented opportunity to bring together governments, non-governmental organizations, representatives of civil society, United Nations agencies and other multilateral organizations. It would also allow countries to express their concerns and to propose possible solutions. It was therefore important that ministers of the environment, agriculture, trade and finance should participate actively in the dialogue during the high-level segment of the eighth session of the Commission.

80. The protocol on biosafety was of particular importance for Colombia, which was one of the five richest countries in terms of biological diversity. In its resolution 53/190, the General Assembly had recognized the importance of adopting an instrument on the question. Earlier in the year, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, meeting at Cartagena (Colombia), had

considered the question. After intense negotiations and substantive progress in the definition of the text of the protocol, the meeting had been suspended without having achieved its final objective; informal consultations had been held in Vienna the previous month, but no progress had been achieved.

81. The protocol had given rise to intense debates which had reaffirmed the need for the adoption of such an instrument. Governments had expressed their determination to advance the negotiations, but the political will had been insufficient to put aside the purely economic and commercial interests and give priority to the potential risks that living modified organisms represented for health and for the conservation of the planet's biological diversity. It was therefore important for all countries to reaffirm their political will and take the necessary measures without further delay to adopt the protocol when the session of the Conference of the Parties resumed in January 2000.

82. **Mr. Tiendrebeogo** (Burkina Faso) said that his country, which was one of those most severely affected by drought and desertification, had launched a national programme of action in order to implement the provisions of the Convention to Combat Desertification. To that end, the Government had adopted a comprehensive approach involving the various actors concerned and taking into account the local socio-economic context. A communication strategy had been established in that connection, in order to inform the population and arouse their awareness. Consultations had been held with the various partners at the national and local levels and particular attention had been paid to the role of women in that connection. There was, however, still much to be done and there should be a more sustained spirit of solidarity in the interests of all.

83. One of the questions of the greatest concern was that of the financing of the Convention. In that connection, it should be remembered that its aim was to help to combat poverty, since it concerned primarily the most vulnerable sectors of the population. It was important, however, not to lose sight of the fact that the instrument was aimed at the whole of humanity, in an endeavour to combat the adverse effects of individual and collective actions on the environment, as well as the burdensome consequences of the degradation of the ecosystem on communities. The financing of the functioning of the structures responsible for bringing the Convention to life should therefore, *inter alia*, contribute to efforts to prevent the exodus of populations to other, richer countries.

84. His delegation therefore solemnly appealed for adequate financing for the secretariat of the Convention and for stronger support for the functioning of the Global Mechanism.

85. It was also to be hoped that the General Assembly would decide to finance, through the regular budget of the United Nations, the conference-servicing costs of the fourth and fifth sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary organs.

86. **Ms. Hawkins** (Australia) noted that the special session of the General Assembly on the review of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action had provided an opportunity to focus the attention of the international community on problems faced by small island developing States with regard to the environment and development. Australia provided financial assistance and considerable support to those countries and had integrated the Barbados priorities into all aid activities under its national and regional strategies.

87. At the special session many small island countries had noted that their development partners had not provided the aid they had expected for the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. Other factors, however, were equally important for the sustainable development of those countries, in particular trade. All future international trade talks must have a balanced agenda which recognized the special circumstances of small island States and other developing countries. It was, indeed, essential to take into account the vulnerability of those countries in international decision-making processes. The South Pacific Forum, of which Australia was a member, had recently reaffirmed its intention of working in the United Nations to defer decisions on the graduation of the least developed countries until a rigorous and reliable vulnerability index had been developed.

88. As one of the world's most biologically diverse countries, Australia attached special importance to the action taken both at the international level and domestically to protect its flora and fauna. It was a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity and was actively implementing its commitments through a range of programmes and policies, including the National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biodiversity and the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act of 1999.

89. Australia was also working constructively on a number of important initiatives designed to protect Australian and global biodiversity. They included the development of guidelines to address alien invasive species and the establishment of the Global Taxonomy Initiative under the Convention. The proposed protocol on biosafety was a significant initiative, for it could strengthen the synergy

between environmental and trade policies, thereby ensuring that trade arrangements and environmental instruments were mutually supportive.

90. With regard to the issue of climate change, to which Australia attached considerable importance, she looked forward to productive negotiations at the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was taking place in Bonn. Her Government was committed to spending almost 1 billion Australian dollars on measures to address those issues. It would like to see as much progress as possible made at that session on the development of a bracketed negotiating text on the Kyoto flexibility mechanisms so that final decisions could be taken at the sixth session in 2000, as required under the Buenos Aires Plan of Action agreed at the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties. Delivering market-based solutions for the three mechanisms — international emissions trading, joint implementation and the clean development mechanism — would ensure that the Kyoto Protocol's environmental objectives were achieved at least economic cost.

91. **Ms. Forde** (Barbados), speaking on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that were members of the United Nations, reaffirmed the commitment of her country to the principles of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The recent special session of the General Assembly for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action had afforded an opportunity to consider the progress made and to identify those areas that required further action.

92. In the report it had submitted at that session the Commission on Sustainable Development had identified climate change, climate variability, sea- level rise, natural disasters, freshwater resources, coastal and marine resources, energy, tourism and trade as priority areas.

93. The small island developing States had endeavoured to assume responsibility for those areas of the Barbados Programme of Action that fell under their national and regional jurisdiction. Thanks to the Programme, Caribbean countries had now prepared national environmental strategies and action plans.

94. One of the fundamental principles on which the Programme of Action was based was that small island developing States accepted responsibility for their sustainable development. However, given the nature of the problems they confronted, the support of the international community was a sine qua non for successful implementation of the Programme.

95. The development partners of the Caribbean countries must mobilize greater resources in order to help finance the Programme. Many Caribbean States faced the double jeopardy of donor fatigue, even as they contended with the implications of premature graduation from concessional financing; that was threatening the very foundations on which the Programme of Action was based. It was important, in that context, that the partners of small island developing States should respect the spirit of the agreements made in Barbados in 1994 and fulfil their commitments under the Programme of Action.

96. In the intervening period, globalization and liberalization had become the most fundamental challenges confronting all nations. Their effects on the most vulnerable countries were far-reaching. The small island developing States recognized that they could not isolate themselves from the forces of globalization and they did not dispute that globalization offered them some opportunities; but they could not seize those opportunities without first making adjustments. Their developed partners must help them adjust to trade liberalization by reversing the trend in the decline of official development assistance.

97. At the forthcoming Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization in Seattle, CARICOM member countries would call for a more democratic WTO, for the benefits of free trade were to be enjoyed by all.

98. The vagaries of the international economic environment had dictated that Caribbean States, like the developing and developed world, should seek to diversify their economies to take advantage of the many opportunities offered by globalization. In the Caribbean region attention had been concentrated on the development of the services sector and some countries in the region had successfully carved out niches in the area of international financial services.

99. A recent report by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on geographically mobile activities and financial and other service activities, referring to what it described as "harmful tax practices", wrongly identified a number of Caribbean countries as "tax havens" and proposed a number of punitive measures that apart from being unjustified would be detrimental to those countries' growing dependence on the important financial services sector.

100. The report was based on the premise that any competition with OECD member countries was harmful and it sought to place all tax regimes in the same basket. Member countries of CARICOM had invested a great deal in the development of their financial services sector. Their

activities were legitimate, competitive and regulated; they were not dissimilar from those of developed countries that encouraged foreign direct investment.

101. The Caribbean countries intended to ensure that their financial service regimes were well regulated and they would continue to work towards setting the highest standards and maintaining careful supervision of those regimes. The CARICOM member States had formed the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force to combat money laundering. The action contemplated by OECD appeared to be unfair and, if applied, could have disastrous consequences on the region.

102. The countries of the region were concerned about the degradation of the Caribbean Sea and were seeking cooperation from the international community in their efforts to ensure the preservation and sustainable management of that natural resource which was vital to the sustainable development of CARICOM member States. That was one of the reasons the Group of 77 and China had submitted a draft resolution which sought to have the Caribbean sea recognized as a special area in the context of sustainable development. It was their contention that the uniqueness of the Caribbean Sea and its vulnerability merited an integrated and coordinated management approach.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.

United Nations A/C.2/54/SR.21

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Summary record of the 21st meeting
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Chairman: Mr. Olhaye ..... (Djibouti)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 100: Environment and sustainable development (*continued*) (A/54/25 and Add.1, A/54/80, A/54/98, A/54/212; A/C.2/54/5)

(c) Convention on biological diversity (*continued*) (A/54/428)

(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind (*continued*)

(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa (*continued*) (A/54/96)

(f) Implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (*continued*) (A/C.2/54/4)

1. **Mr. Desai** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs), speaking with regard to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, said that whereas the Kyoto Protocol stipulated that the Parties included in Annex 1 to the Convention undertook to reduce their overall emissions of greenhouse gases by at least 5 per cent below 1990 levels in the commitment period 2008 to 2012, current trends suggested that those emissions would in fact increase by 18 per cent during that time period. There was a need for serious policy changes in the countries concerned if that trend was to be reversed and the target met. Those changes, which should be discussed at the Sixth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, should include credible national systems for emissions accounting, reporting and review of emissions inventories, policy options for sinks, the role of domestic policies and the function of the Kyoto Protocol mechanism.

2. The Convention secretariat was administered according to the United Nations regulations and rules on personnel and financial matters, a cost-effective arrangement. The division of administrative tasks in support of the secretariat was currently under review with a view to concentrating as many as possible of those tasks in the secretariat in Bonn and minimizing the involvement of the United Nations Office at Geneva and of Headquarters in New York. In particular, funding conference services for the meetings of treaty bodies under the regular budget had led to considerable savings in the Convention budget during the 1996-1997 and 1998-1999 bienniums. That arrangement would be reviewed in the context of the adoption of the next convention budget and of the regular budget for the biennium 2000-2001. He hoped that the current arrangements would be maintained.

3. Because small island developing States were the most vulnerable to climate change, they had been the first to express concern at that problem and to take action to address it. However, they had not received adequate financial or technical support for the implementation of programmes under the Barbados Programme of Action. He hoped that the General Assembly would find the political will to provide such support.

4. It was time to consider whether the process of intergovernmental consultation and implementation begun in Rio and continued at a series of conferences and other forums was producing the desired results and whether those discussions were being translated into policy change at the level of Governments and regional institutions. It was important to ensure that the upcoming 10-year review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development focused on those important issues. To that end, a series of regional consultative meetings had been or would soon be held in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and there were plans to hold a meeting in order to promote an exchange of views among national bodies working in the field of sustainable development. In that regard, he welcomed the high level of voluntary reporting by Member States and suggested that an expert group on institutional arrangements should be established in order to determine whether those arrangements were capable of creating the necessary pressure for implementation.

5. Discussion of those matters should be part of a long-term assessment of global monitoring and critical trends. One of the most promising outcomes of the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention had been the holding of a series of multi-stakeholder conferences with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which had played an important role in the Rio process. Those initiatives should be pursued.

6. It was easy to lose sight of long-term goals in times of financial crisis, but Member States needed to achieve clarity on such matters and to ensure that sustainable development remained the primary focus of the Organization's work.

7. **Mr. Ka** (Senegal), speaking with regard to agenda item 100 (e), said that implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa had been hindered by the fact that certain States Parties attached less importance to that instrument than to the other United Nations conventions on

the environment. Preservation of the environment for future generations required a global, integrated strategy that was fundamentally incompatible with a selective approach. Problems related to climate change, biodiversity and drought and desertification were interrelated and called for action at all levels in order to reverse the negative trends that impeded Member States' common progress towards sustainable development.

8. His Government was implementing the Convention through a participative, decentralized approach and, to that end, had developed a national plan of action to combat desertification through environmental education and training; programmes in the fields of, *inter alia*, agriculture, forestry, reforestation, energy; and involvement of local communities in natural resource management. His Government was also adopting, reviewing and harmonizing its legislation and regulations and adapting its administrative procedures to the needs of environmental management. He thanked the bilateral and multilateral partners that had provided assistance in those areas.

9. **Mr. Manele** (Solomon Islands) said that little international action had been taken to complement the efforts of small island developing States to implement the Barbados Programme of Action. His country had taken steps towards implementation of the Programme by adopting appropriate policies and enacting the necessary legislative measures. In that regard, biodiversity conservation, coastal and marine fisheries resources, agriculture, adaptation measures to cope with climate change and sea level rise would continue to be among priority areas where national, regional and international partnership would be critical. Equally important were effective strategies for natural disaster preparedness and mitigation. Investment in renewable sources of energy would contribute to the development of provincial and rural areas.

10. The special position of small island developing States must be recognized. Therefore, the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action must take into account the economic vulnerability and ecological fragility of those States as well as their limited resources. Official development assistance should be directed at capacity-building, both in terms of infrastructure and human resources development. A combination of capital and technical assistance was required to meet the goals and objectives of the Barbados Programme of Action. With the increasing risks posed by globalization and trade liberalization, the sustainable development of small island developing States had become more challenging. International support to assist those States in utilizing the opportunities and mitigating the negative impact of those global forces was vital. The role of the United Nations and other international institutions in ensuring stronger global governance of globalization was critical. In addition, international action was required to facilitate economic diversification, ensure market access, stabilize primary commodity prices and reverse declines in ODA flows.

11. **Mr. Cabactulan** (Philippines) said that more work was needed on the terms of reference for the Panel of Experts on Access and Benefit Sharing in order to ensure that the biological diversity within countries was carefully protected, while at the same time ensuring that such resources were utilized in a manner that fully respected the proprietary rights of indigenous communities and enabled the original developers in developing countries to share the benefits. The Panel must also carry out its work expeditiously, particularly with respect to access and benefit-sharing for scientific and commercial purposes. He hoped that the negotiations of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity would lead to the early adoption of a body of mutually agreed measures for global action on matters relating to biosafety. While genetically modified organisms represented a tremendous potential for food production and food security, the international community should proceed carefully, and within the bounds of common principles, so that the environment, and human health were not put in jeopardy. It was also imperative that relevant technologies should be widely shared in order to enable developing countries to increase their production of food and other agricultural products.

12. The countries that had not yet done so, were urged to sign or ratify the Kyoto Protocol as soon as possible so that it could come into effect. Developed countries must undertake urgent and effective steps to implement their commitments under the Protocol. It was also critical for developing countries to be provided with adequate support in terms of resources and technical know-how so that they could meet their commitments under the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

13. His delegation fully supported the activities being carried out in connection with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Referring to paragraph 18 of the Secretary-General's report (A/54/96), he said that it was his delegation's understanding that the Committee would have to endorse decision 3/COP/2 of the Conference of the Parties so that the Fifth Committee could take the necessary decisions regarding the budget. That was the procedure which had been followed at the fifty-second session.

14. The Philippines, an archipelago with a large number of small islands, fully understood how vulnerable small island developing States were to the fury of nature. The international community should therefore intensify its efforts to fully implement the Barbados Programme of Action and the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to the review and appraisal of the implementation of that Programme.

15. **Mr. Koech** (Kenya) said that the strengthening of the United Nations Office at Nairobi would enable the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to discharge its environmental duties more effectively. Noting that desertification affected 80 per cent of his country and 8 to 10 million people, he expressed great concern at the funding mechanisms of the desertification programmes and called on the developed countries to meet their obligations under the Convention to Combat Desertification. He likewise urged UNEP and other multinational agencies to explore more avenues for sustainable funding. The Global Mechanism, whose mandate included mobilizing and channelling financial resources should be assisted to become more effective and the Global Environment Facility should be restructured in order to increase funding for programmes under the Convention to Combat Desertification.

16. Kenya called on the international community, especially the developed countries, to reach mutual understanding with developing countries in the conservation of biodiversity. Apart from problems of inadequate financial resources to support implementation activities, particularly those of developing countries, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on Biodiversity and the decisions of the Conference of the Parties, other urgent issues also needed to be tackled, including the reconciliation of trade and environment in the agreement on trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights. In that regard, the Convention should support the work by indigenous and local communities towards the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. The biosafety protocol, should be completed as soon as possible.

17. While his country had a low emission ratio of greenhouse gases, it required further encouragement to use climate-friendly technologies. In that regard, it expected developed countries to respect their commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, since they were responsible for the highest emissions. Lastly, he reiterated his delegation's support for the United Nations initiative on small island developing States, which were vulnerable and faced constraints in their efforts to achieve development.

18. **Mr. Gabay** (Israel) said that the Convention on Biological Diversity was the first global convention which stated that conservation of biological diversity was a common concern of humankind and an integral part of sustainable development. The provisions of the Convention had ramifications on the world market in terms of international agreements on trade and biotechnologies, access to genetic resources and gene banks, development of agricultural products, use of natural resources and rehabilitation of ecological systems. In compliance with the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change, Israel had integrated a number of measures into its sustainable development programmes, including dryland development with the conservation of biodiversity, and the mitigation of climate change through afforestation and solar energy development.

19. In that connection, the approach of the International Programme for Arid Land Crops, an international effort sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Finland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Centre for International Cooperation of Israel, was based on the finding that the most influential force in the history of agriculture had been the transfer of plant germplasm and crops between geographical regions. The initiative for collaboration in combating desertification in the drylands of the Middle East was facilitated by the World Bank and the International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas. Research and development projects were carried out by Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, Tunisia and Israel. Israel's efforts in that field showed its determination to promote peaceful and friendly relations with all its neighbours.

20. His country was deeply committed to sharing its experience in the area of dryland development, with other countries. In that regard, the Blaustein Institute for Desert Research, which had been upgraded into an international centre for combating desertification, would mobilize all relevant Israeli and international organizations in catering to the Middle Eastern, Asian, African and Latin American countries affected by desertification. The Centre had launched a number of educational innovations and had established a computer-mediated information centre. Israel also promoted partnership in desertification-related research with developed countries and had signed tripartite agreements on research that linked it to the United States of America, Germany and the Netherlands.

21. In his delegation's view, only regional cooperation and cross-border partnerships, not politics, could stop desertification. Regional boundaries should therefore not exist to prevent cooperation, but to promote it.

22. **Mr. Chouinard** (Canada) said that the environmental threats facing the world were of such magnitude that all countries must act together to tackle them. That fact had been demonstrated at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. In that regard, a strong, legally binding agreement on forests, that built on the forest principles established at Rio, was the best way to create and channel the political will needed to comprehensively address the problems facing the world's forests. At its next session the Commission on Sustainable Development would have to make a crucial decision on future international arrangements and mechanisms on that subject. Such decision would be based on the recommendation of the fourth and final meeting of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests to be held in New York in February 2000. At the initiative of Canada and Costa Rica, a series of regional meetings, attended by representatives of both developed and developing countries as well as stakeholder groups, had been held to identify possible elements and work towards a consensus on international arrangements and mechanisms. His delegation was convinced that those meetings would contribute to a better understanding and full consideration of the concerns of countries and other interested parties.

23. Climate change stood out as one of the most difficult pressing environmental challenges. The international community must now work together to facilitate implementation of the commitments under the Kyoto Protocol and reduction of global emissions of greenhouse gasses. His delegation viewed early agreement on the Kyoto mechanisms as particularly important. Emissions trading, and projects to reduce emissions through the clean development mechanism and joint implementation processes, could help to meet obligations in a cost-effective manner. Basic guidelines were also necessary to ensure proper monitoring, reporting and verification of emissions reduction.

24. Since desertification contributed to the impoverishment of a large number of developing countries, particularly in Africa, efforts to combat it represented a crucial international challenge. Noting that Canada had provided more than $400,000 to support the secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification and had spent approximately $40 million on bilateral projects related to desertification, he urged all countries that had not yet become parties to the Convention to do so in order to help to combat that phenomenon more effectively.

25. Canada attached considerable importance to the elaboration of a global convention on persistent organic pollutants (POPs). The indigenous peoples of northern Canada were particularly susceptible to such pollutants, which tended to travel to colder climates and accumulate in the food chain. A strong and effective convention must be science-based, transparent and capable of attracting a high level of compliance.

26. Canada welcomed the positive outcome of the seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, particularly with regard to oceans and seas. It hoped that the Commission's recommendation on a new, open consultative process would help to broaden and enhance the General Assembly's annual debate on oceans and the law of the sea and that that would lead to improved international coordination and cooperation. Canada had participated in the special session of the General Assembly for a full and comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and would continue to support the implementation of the Programme of Action. Partnership between small island States and the international community was a key factor in the implementation of both the Barbados Programme of Action and the final document adopted by the special session.

27. His delegation called for the integration of trade and environmental policies and for coordination between national ministries in those areas. Mutually supportive trade and environmental policies were essential to ensuring that the next round of negotiations of the World Trade Organization and the ongoing work of the United Nations contributed to the achievement of sustainable development. Trade policies must not become obstacles to environmental protection and, conversely, environmental policies must not curb trade unnecessarily. His delegation supported greater cooperation and coordination between WTO and UNEP, particularly in building an understanding of the complex relationship between trade liberalization and environmental objectives and in establishing a framework to clarify the relationship between multilateral environmental agreements and WTO.

28. **Mr. Robertson** (New Zealand) said that new approaches, such as closer partnerships between Governments and the private sector, would be vital to achieving sustainable development. The 10-year review of Agenda 21, to be held in 2002, must not be a repeat of the disappointing nineteenth special session. Participants in the review must be well prepared and willing to engage in substantive and meaningful dialogue. His delegation welcomed the recommendations formulated by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its seventh session for further work on sustainable development, particularly the consultative process to facilitate improved

consideration of ocean issues within the United Nations system.

29. His delegation welcomed the outcomes of the recent special session on small island developing States and hoped that Member States would make every effort to meet their commitments under the Barbados Programme of Action. It supported efforts to take into account the particular ecological and economic vulnerabilities of small island developing States, for example, through the inclusion of appropriate vulnerability indicators in the criteria for granting least-developed-country status.

30. He expressed satisfaction at the efforts of the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to enhance cooperation with other agencies, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), WTO and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), and within the framework of the (Ramsar) Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat. The longer intervals between sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention should be used to increase scientific input in the process and to prioritize activities. It would be important to focus on high-priority, cross-cutting issues. Improved planning, enhanced regional processes and clear decisions were also vital to the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

31. New Zealand shared the deep concern of other countries in its region over climate change, particularly sea-level rise and changing weather patterns. In that connection, the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was a positive but incomplete achievement. It was therefore crucial for the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to make substantive progress on key elements of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, the timely entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol and the development of rules for its implementation on a least-cost basis. Emissions trading should proceed on a liberal and open basis, without restrictions such as quotas or ceilings that would distort the market. Developed countries must take the lead in addressing climate change; however, significant developing country emitters must also undertake commitments commensurate with their individual national circumstances.

32. **Mr. Draunimasi** (Fiji) said that all Member States should focus greater attention on implementing the Barbados Plan of Action and take concrete action to that end. His delegation had already reiterated its concern at the slow pace of progress in that regard. The development problems of small island States with respect to drinking water supply, education, health, infrastructure, energy and food security were fundamental to human survival but could not be overcome without the assistance of the United Nations system and the international community.

33. His Government's long-term sustainable development strategies were aimed at upgrading the living standard of the citizens of Fiji, eradicating poverty, empowering women and youth, increasing employment and protecting the environment, in particular from land degradation and the trans-shipment of hazardous and toxic material across the oceans. It had enacted a law on the sustainable use of Fiji's limited renewable and non-renewable land and sea resources and readjusted its sectoral policies with a view to ensuring sustained natural resource utilization; the development of human-resource-based industries; the improvement of social services in the fields of health, education and housing; poverty alleviation; rural and urban development; and disaster management.

34. In an era of globalization and liberalization, the small island developing States were finding it difficult to regain the market access and preferential treatment that had once helped them to become more self-reliant. Under those circumstances, the provision of official development assistance was more crucial than ever. The developing countries had fulfilled their commitments under the Barbados Programme of Action and now called upon their developed partners to do likewise.

35. **Ms. Khan-Cummings** (Trinidad and Tobago) said that at the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago had stressed the need to enhance economic security and the quality of life in small island developing States. The sustainable development efforts of Trinidad and Tobago were focused on employment, poverty eradication, the retraining of its nationals and crime reduction.

36. Among the many social and economic challenges faced by small island developing States, issues relating to poverty, illicit drug trafficking, crime, and HIV/AIDS should be addressed on a priority basis. Her delegation embraced the poverty eradication strategy outlined by the President of the Economic and Social Council during the Council's July session and recognized the crucial role of partnership between Governments and the private sector in achieving sustainable development in such areas as education, human resource development and development infrastructure. National efforts to that end must be buttressed at the regional and international levels. In that connection, she noted that at the meeting of small island developing States and donors,

held in February, Trinidad and Tobago had submitted 22 projects for partnership funding in such areas as production, employment, income generation, poverty reduction and environmental equity. Thus far, three of the projects submitted by Trinidad and Tobago had attracted private-sector funding from the United States of America; Italy had indicated that it would contribute to a trust fund for public administration projects in three Caribbean small island developing States; and Singapore had established a technical assistance and training package for small island developing States.

37. In July 1999, the Caribbean Heads of Government had endorsed a proposal to recognize the Caribbean Sea, with its unique biodiversity and fragile ecosystem, as a special area in the context of sustainable development. She hoped that the Committee would support that initiative.

38. **Mr. Yoon Jong-soo** (Republic of Korea) said that burden-sharing and participation by developing countries under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol should be addressed once the industrialized countries had fulfilled their commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In particular, the clean development mechanism, joint implementation and emissions trading modalities of the Kyoto Protocol must be implemented urgently.

39. Referring to the Convention on Biological Diversity, he said that biotechnology was a double-edged sword which, on the one hand, created new opportunities for poverty eradication and, on the other hand, posed risks to the environment and human health. In view of the increasing trade in genetically modified organisms, their potential risks must be urgently addressed. It was therefore regrettable that a consensus had not been reached in February on the adoption of a protocol on biosafety. His delegation hoped that substantial progress to that end would be achieved at the resumed session of the first extraordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to be held in Montreal in January 2000.

40. The industrialized countries should help developing countries, particularly in Africa, to implement their own national action programmes to combat desertification. In that connection his delegation attached great importance to the efficient operation of the Global Mechanism. Having ratified the Convention to Combat Desertification in August, the Republic of Korea was a party to nearly all the major international environmental agreements. In conclusion, he stressed the importance of enhanced technological cooperation and financial assistance from industrialized countries in order to build the capacity of developing countries to meet environmental challenges.

41. **Mr. Badenhorst** (South Africa) said that, without enhanced concessional financial resources and the transfer of environmentally sound technology on concessional terms, developing countries would be unable to make significant progress in achieving sustainable development. His delegation had already stressed the need to begin discussing preparations for the 10-year review of the implementation of Agenda 21, and it was looking forward to the report of the Secretary-General on the form, scope and nature of the preparatory process, to be discussed at the eighth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

42. His delegation welcomed and supported the initiatives for the future implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, which had been adopted during the recent twenty-second special session of the General Assembly. Effective and successful implementation of those initiatives would require substantial financial resources, political will and the support of the relevant multilateral institutions.

43. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification was of major importance to the African continent as a whole and to South Africa in particular. Nearly 50 per cent of South Africa was arid or semi-arid and was threatened by desertification. Recurrent drought in Africa had affected agriculture and caused severe poverty and malnutrition. His delegation hoped that developed country partners, would make voluntary contributions to the Global Mechanism, and that the Global Mechanism would increase its support for enabling activities such as partnership arrangements and the elaboration of national reports.

44. South Africa and the countries of the southern African region were particularly vulnerable to the impact of climate change and global warming. Repeated severe drought and occasional widespread flooding were hampering the subregion's sustainable development efforts. His delegation strongly supported the greenhouse gas stabilization objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the reduction measures contained in the Kyoto Protocol and the Protocol's early entry into force. It also supported the objectives of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action and hoped that the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention, currently taking place in Bonn, would conform to the timetable it established.

45. Noting that 80 per cent of the needs of the world's poor were derived from biological resources, his delegation welcomed the inter-sessional activities of the parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, particularly the Panel

of Experts on Access and Benefit-sharing. It continued to support the conclusion of a balanced protocol on biosafety that would protect developing countries against harmful exports of genetically modified products without restricting developments in biotechnology. It called on all States participating in the negotiations to continue their efforts to conclude a protocol on biosafety at the resumed session of the first extraordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties in January 2000. In conclusion, he stressed the importance of innovative South-South cooperation and North-South partnerships in achieving sustainable development, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

46. **Ms. Jorgensen** (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) said that the goals of the Convention to Combat Desertification dovetailed with efforts by UNDP to improve governance for sustainable human development. The Convention also provided a valuable framework for implementing the Programme's agenda in the world's drylands. UNDP was implementing the Convention by providing support to country and regional initiatives and to the Global Mechanism. Its Office to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNSO) and its country offices provided support to affected countries for, *inter alia*, the development and implementation of national or subregional action programmes and the development of national desertification funds. Gender mainstreaming and the promotion of women in decision-making were key components of the Programme's activities to implement the Convention. Increasingly, countries were allocating resources through their country cooperation frameworks to deal with desertification and poverty. Since 1995, UNDP had provided support to some 50 countries and six subregions and would increase its support for resource mobilization through the resident coordinator system.

47. UNDP was prepared to facilitate the work of the Global Mechanism at the country level by building partnerships; assisting in resource mobilization at country level through the round-table mechanism and other appropriate processes; supporting affected countries in developing programmes to attract funding; facilitating the work of the Global Mechanism; and, as a member of the Facilitation Committee, continuing to support the work of the Global Mechanism in developing its operations.

48. The two greatest challenges were integrating national action plans into other national development planning frameworks and ongoing programmes and increasing the involvement of civil society in action plan processes in order to adapt projects and programmes to the needs of local communities. She appealed for increased support to the UNDP Trust Fund to Combat Desertification and Drought. Insufficient funding was affecting the Programme's effectiveness, particularly in African countries.

49. In the area of biodiversity, UNDP was helping countries to prepare national biodiversity strategies and action plans. Currently, 73 countries were receiving a total of US$ 14.5 million in assistance, primarily from the Global Environment Facility. UNDP was also helping countries to develop an Internet-based national clearing house mechanism in accordance with the Convention on Biological Diversity. It was working closely with the United Nations Foundation for International Partnerships in formulating its biodiversity programme strategy, which would focus on World Heritage protected sites and coral reefs.

50. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, provided the framework for UNDP activities in the area of climate change. UNDP focused on national communications and regional activities for the joint implementation of commitments under the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Global Environment Facility. Financial and technical assistance was currently being provided to 93 non-Annex I countries. Other activities included launching exploratory capacity-building, developing options for the clean development mechanism and reconciling development and climate change mitigation objectives.

51. **Mr. Don Nanjira** (World Meteorological Organization (WMO)) said that his organization's priorities included supporting the review and upgrading of climate observing systems and projects under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and participating in the work of the Inter-Agency Committee on Climate Change; maintaining its leading role in the prediction of the El Niño/La Niña phenomena, participating in preventing and mitigating their negative effects and supporting the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; improving inter-agency cooperation on responses to climate change and variability and combating environmental problems; implementing the results of the conventions and related international agreements and commitments that flowed from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development; and intensifying its cooperation with other organizations on further analysis of the El Niño/La Niña phenomena and related events.

52. WMO emphasized the need for developing global climate observational networks and systems and research for detecting, monitoring and predicting climate change, and for verifying the effectiveness of measures taken under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

to limit emissions of greenhouse gases. The organization also reaffirmed the need for national meteorological and hydrological services to participate fully in implementing the Convention at national and international levels, and would be collaborating with partner organizations and member States in identifying priorities for action and financial support to improve global climate observing systems in developing areas through capacity-building activities in support of national meteorological and hydrological services, and in continuing to support those activities in close cooperation with the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

53. WMO would also continue its close collaboration with the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; it would be implementing the Convention through the provision of scientific and technical support and through other activities and commitments to enhance climate and hydrological monitoring networks.

54. WMO would continue to contribute to the protection of the environment and the promotion of the social and economic development of its member States through sustained and collaborative implementation of the climate agenda and related activities, projects agreements with the United nations system and other partner organizations; through enhanced capacity-building for education, training and other collaborative operations for developing countries and other needy areas; and through increased efforts to promote technical cooperation and resource mobilization for sustainable development.

55. **Mr. Albader** (Qatar) noted that sustainable development must be compatible with the preservation of a healthy environment. The health of the environment was currently a cause for concern, especially in the case of the least developed countries. Environmental degradation, as far as those countries were concerned, was closely bound up with the inadequacy of the economic and technological resources available to them. Accordingly, a concerted effort by the international community was needed to arrest such degradation. In that connection, it was regrettable that so little progress had been made in dealing with the issues of desertification and drought. Success in that endeavour would require more international cooperation, with greater input from the developed countries.

56. His Government, having long since grasped the importance of environmental issues, had undertaken a broadly based campaign aimed at raising environmental awareness among the population. Desertification and drought were of particular relevance to his country, and it had recently acceded to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

57. Finally, he expressed the hope that the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which the General Assembly had decided to convene in the year 2001, would afford an opportunity of solving the serious problems afflicting those countries, notably desertification and drought, which were impeding their sustainable development.

58. **Ms. Rühl Burzi** (Observer for Switzerland) said that it was essential to promote the universal ratification of the three Rio conventions and progressively to strengthen them and devote particular attention to their implementation. Her delegation was concerned that little progress had been made since the adoption in 1997 of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: greenhouse gas emissions in practically all countries, particularly the highly developed countries, were increasing. Switzerland attached particular importance to the Protocol's rapid entry into force and implementation. The Swiss Parliament had passed a law according to which carbon dioxide emissions would be reduced by 10 per cent by 2010 compared with 1990; if the measures proved inadequate, a tax on carbon dioxide emissions could be introduced in 2004.

59. As for the Convention on Biological Diversity, and particularly the negotiations for a protocol on biosafety, her Government would like to see a rapid conclusion of the negotiations at the resumed session of the first extraordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in January 2000. On one of the current sticking points — the transboundary movement of living modified organisms intended for consumption or transformation — her Government advocated a differentiated solution taking account of the constraints of the international market and the particular situation of developing countries. Implementation of the Convention's provisions regarding access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing were also priorities for Switzerland, which was engaged in seeking solutions acceptable to both developing and industrialized countries.

60. Her Government had played an active part in developing the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and had allocated US$ 53 million in bilateral aid in that area in the period 1997-1999. It attached particular importance to discussing early warning systems, and emphasized the need to make information available at local level.

61. **Ms. Weill-Hallé** (International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)), speaking also on behalf of the Global

Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, said that IFAD had given priority to tackling the threat of desertification in Africa and had integrated the Convention objectives in its lending strategy for the region. It was working throughout the developing world to fight land degradation and poverty; in Asia, it had initiated a programme targeting very poor rural households in upland areas, which integrated natural resource management, economic diversification and the creation of local employment.

62. It also took a leading role in promoting implementation of national action programmes, which, along with regional and subregional action programmes, were ideal vehicles for adapting policies to the needs of the people of the drylands. Its most useful contribution to the control of desertification was in laying the groundwork for replicable programmes and projects at local level, placing the emphasis on initiatives stemming from the local people themselves.

63. The Fund was also playing an important role in mobilizing strategic partnerships with UNDP, the World Bank, the Convention secretariat, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNEP, FAO and regional development banks to implement the Convention. Together with the World Bank, it had initiated a joint "accelerated" learning programme with GEF to assist dryland countries in controlling land degradation, alleviating poverty and pursuing global environmental objectives. The Fund and FAO had concluded a memorandum of understanding, and would be working together to assist countries in implementing the Convention and in promoting collaborative activities for sustainable dryland development.

64. The Fund recognized that non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations also had a vital role to play in implementing the Convention, and had provided them with Technical Assistance Grants for specific areas that were crucial to desertification control. IFAD's Extended Cooperation Programme was another useful tool in that it used grants to support innovative NGO activities which backed up existing IFAD activities. The key areas of activity were the creation of an awareness of desertification, the Convention and the Global Mechanism in the context of development; policy formulation for the development of arid and semi-arid zones; the participation of civil society in Convention-related national or regional efforts through group formation; training in and dissemination of resource management technology; and credit management.

65. Reporting on the progress made by the Global Mechanism in its efforts to bring about a more efficient and effective use of existing resources and mobilizing additional resources for the fight against desertification, she said that the Global Mechanism was assisting in developing action programmes, supporting the development and financing of enabling activities which enhanced capacity in planning and implementing action programmes, and pursuing strategic initiatives to mobilize additional resources for the Convention. It was also attempting to create a synergy between the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

66. While heartening progress had been made in tackling desertification, there was no room for complacency. The potential of biotechnology for the alleviation of hunger and poverty in drylands remained unexamined, and modalities for favourable access and transfer of technology had to be developed. While progress had been made in exploring linkages between the two Conventions and debt relief initiatives, more remained to be done. Perhaps most important of all was the fulfilment of donor financial commitments in support of the Global Mechanism. Only when those commitments had been fulfilled would the affected developing countries have the resources they needed to tackle desertification head-on.

67. **Ms. Wong** (Singapore) said that as a small island State with no natural resources, her country was acutely aware of the impact on its environmental well-being of external factors, and was committed to playing a proactive role in supporting regional and global initiatives to protect the environment. Singapore had recently acceded to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and strongly supported its call for an integrated approach to addressing the problems of scarce water resources and poverty eradication.

68. Singapore's three-year technical assistance programme for sustainable development which was intended to help developing countries through the provision of training in areas such as urban environmental management, environmental technology, solid waste management, water supply engineering, urban planning and transport management, had so far benefitted more than 1,000 people from 80 countries. Singapore had recently announced a customized technical cooperation programme which would offer 300 training places over the next five years for the small island developing States.

Draft resolution on conservation and sustainable development of central African forests ecosystems (A/C.2/54/L.7)

69. **Mr. Eboutou** (Cameroon), speaking also on behalf of Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and the Republic of the Congo, introduced the draft resolution and announced that at the recent Summit of Central African Heads of State on the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Tropical Forests, participating Governments had undertaken to classify 30 per cent of their respective territories as protected areas. Given the difficult economic situation of those countries that was a major decision, and in that connection he drew attention to paragraph 1, which proposed that the General Assembly should decide to establish a trust fund to provide sustainable support for the central African countries in their efforts for the management and conservation of and research into forest ecosystems.

70. Lastly, he drew attention to an editorial change in the third preambular paragraph of the French text.

Agenda item 101: Operational activities for development (*continued*)

(b) Economic and technical cooperation among developing countries (*continued*) (A/C.2/54/L.5 and A/C.2/54/L.6)

Draft resolution on economic and technical cooperation among developing countries (A/C.2/54/L.5)

71. **Mr. Talbot** (Guyana), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, drew attention to an editorial change in the third preambular paragraph. The draft resolution focused on the need for strengthened cooperation between developing countries at the regional and subregional levels, and recognized the important contribution that the forthcoming South Summit in Havana could provide for the strengthening of South-South cooperation.

Draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community (A/C.2/54/L.6)

72. **Mr. dos Santos** (Mozambique) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.

United Nations A/C.2/54/SR.22

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Summary record of the 22nd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 26 October 1999, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Olhaye ..... (Djibouti)
later: Mr. Niculescu (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Romania)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 100: Environment and sustainable development (*continued*)(A/54/25 and Add.1, A/54/80, A/54/98 and A/54/212; A/C.2/54/5)

(c) Convention on Biological Diversity (A/54/428)

(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind

(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa (A/54/96)

(f) Implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/C.2/54/4)

1. **Ms. Critchlow** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.8 under agenda item 100 (e). She said that the Group of 77 and China welcomed the growing number of countries which had ratified the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and sought to secure the necessary financing for its implementation. They hoped to have regular programme budget financing to cover the costs of servicing the Conferences of the Parties during the period 2000-2001. They were also requesting Governments, the multilateral financial institutions, the regional development banks and other organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to make financial contributions. The draft resolution basically sought to ensure the necessary financing for implementation of the Convention.

2. **Mr. Klopotowski** (Poland) said that his country attached great importance to the Convention on Biological Diversity because it possessed one of the largest reservoirs of biological diversity in a natural or near-natural state in Europe, and its resources were threatened by pollution of the soil, water and the atmosphere and by climatic changes and other phenomena leading to the drying of wetlands, as well as by the expansion of agriculture, urbanization and the development of transport.

3. His Government had developed a system for protecting biological diversity and restoring ecosystems. Taking into account the global and transnational character of environmental problems, it strongly supported increased international cooperation in dealing with such problems. It was necessary to strengthen biosafety within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and it was to be hoped that a protocol on biosafety would soon be adopted. A global agreement regulating international trade in genetically modified organisms would contribute to better environmental protection and would calm people's fears.

4. Global warming would continue to be one of the major challenges of the twenty-first century. His Government's economic policy had enabled greenhouse gas emissions to be reduced by almost 30 per cent in relation to the base year. Nevertheless, additional measures would be necessary if Poland was to meet the targets set under the Kyoto Protocol. Mindful that successful implementation of the Kyoto Protocol depended on its swift entry into force, Poland, which was chairing the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, would seek to accelerate the negotiating process, which might prove to be an extremely difficult task in view of the number and complexity of the problems. He hoped that the negotiations would permit a consensus to be reached so that the Conference would be able to prepare the final decisions.

5. Poland was not a party to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, because the Convention did not address concerns related to drought and land degradation in Central Europe. His delegation welcomed the idea of consultations on a new annex to the Convention dealing with problems arising from water shortage and drought and hoped that the process would soon lead to the adoption of an additional regional annex for Central and Eastern Europe. The adoption of such an instrument could only accelerate Poland's accession to the Convention.

6. **Mr. Ibrahim** (Nigeria) said that the continued decline of the earth's biological diversity threatened ecosystems and human development. He welcomed the efforts aimed at the adoption of a biosafety protocol relating to the transfer, handling and use of modified living organisms and said that there was also a need to establish standards and guidelines to control the introduction of new technologies and products resulting from genetic engineering.

7. There was also the utmost need for consistency in implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity in relation to the World Trade Organization agreements on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. His Government was particularly interested in the protection of indigenous knowledge, regulations regarding access to biological resources, and the patenting of herbal remedies and crop varieties.

8. Implementation of the various objectives of the Convention would require States participating in the

negotiations on a biosafety protocol to resolve issues on trade, the treatment of commodities and conflicts of interest between national and international regulatory regimes.

9. His delegation deplored the fact that, despite the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, emission levels and the concentration of greenhouse gases had continued to rise. Climate change would remain one of the biggest challenges of the next century. Full implementation of the Convention must address the concerns of the developing countries regarding the reduction of greenhouses gases and other core issues of the Kyoto Protocol.

10. Nigeria attached great importance to implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification but regretted that only limited progress had been made in dealing with a problem which affected 70 per cent of the world's dryland, most of it in Africa. The international community had not provided the necessary financial resources and technical assistance for effective implementation of the Convention. There was therefore an urgent need to address the issue of inadequate resources. His delegation hoped that the establishment of a separate framework for the Global Mechanism would galvanize the international community into action.

11. Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States had shown the inadequacy of efforts to implement the Barbados Plan of Action. The consequences for small island developing States of floods, hurricanes, drought and natural disasters had rendered them completely helpless. His delegation therefore supported the mobilization of new resources to strengthen their institutional capacities.

12. **Ms. Fahmy** (Egypt) said that, like other developing countries, Egypt believed that the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in May 2000 in Nairobi, should attempt to ensure balance between objectives relating to the exploitation of biological resources and the sovereignty of developing countries over those resources. The Conference of the Parties should also consider the protocol on biosafety, whose adoption had been delayed because commercial and political interests had prevailed over protection of the environment and public health. Food security should not be achieved at the expense of the health of future generations, whether in developed or developing countries.

13. She joined in requesting all States which had not yet done so to adhere to the Kyoto Protocol to the Framework Convention on Climate Change in order for it to enter into force, especially as some international organizations were attempting to legitimize increases in greenhouse gas emissions by giving them a legal cover.

14. Her Government attached particular importance to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. It considered it the most important among the conventions concluded at Rio because it was directly linked to the sustainable development of the African continent, of which Egypt was an integral part. Her Government was concerned at the reduction in the financial resources allocated to the Convention secretariat, which was delaying implementation of the Convention. There was also the risk that the proposal to make the Convention into a framework for debt relief could delay its implementation until a solution to the debt problem, which the international community had been unable to solve for a quarter century, was found. Moreover, the Convention would be diverted from its true purpose and objective which was to combat one of the most serious ecological phenomena. Failing to fulfil the moral and financial commitments already made by delaying implementation and by contriving an artificial relationship between different aspects of development was out of the question as it would only serve to marginalize the developing countries further.

15. Her delegation also wished to stress that the bodies involved in the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification should respect it in full. The true relationship between desertification, poverty and natural resources management and the purpose of the Convention should be explored. It was appropriate to recall the preamble to the Convention, in which the United Nations reiterated the principle of the Rio Declaration concerning the rights of States to utilize their own natural resources in accordance with their own environment and development policies. Finally, her delegation stressed the need to provide in the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 the funds necessary for holding the fourth and fifth sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification, in accordance with the resolution adopted at the third session.

16. **Mr. Al Banai** (Kuwait) said that his Government attached particular importance to the environment within the framework of its development policy. Environmental issues were the responsibility of the Council on Environmental Protection, an advisory body whose mission was to gather and analyse data and provide opinions to help the Government design policy. The Ministry of Health, the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research and the University of Kuwait were also closely involved in environmental issues. At the regional level, in addition to the establishment

of the regional Environmental Protection Agency, member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council had adopted a common regime for waste management and for the protection of nature.

17. The marine environment in Kuwait and in the Gulf continued to suffer the effects of one of the largest marine ecological catastrophes ever, caused by the Iraqi invasion in 1990, during which close to 240 ships were sunk in the northern part of the Gulf. To date, the effects of the clouds of smoke and acid rain caused by fires set in almost 700 oil wells had not been fully evaluated. His Government was grateful to the specialized agencies for the efforts they had made to limit the effects of that catastrophe and restore the environment of the region. The United Nations Compensation Commission had done a remarkable job in compensating victims of the Iraqi aggression from over 90 countries, but efforts were still needed to respond to requests for reparation in the area of the environment. Since ecosystems were interdependent, his delegation appealed to all countries to respect the spirit and the letter of the international conventions on protection of the environment and to refrain from any action that could upset the ecological balance.

18. **Mr. Al Aujali** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that environmental issues were the top priority for many countries, especially those suffering from desertification, which was related to drought. Those two phenomena affected African countries in particular, which were also facing poverty and underdevelopment.

19. One of the most serious consequences of drought and desertification could be seen in internal migrations and all the economic and social problems they caused. Short of the radical solution of restoring the areas of origin and resettling displaced population groups there, one of the measures that could improve the lot of such groups would be to integrate them into their new environment by providing access to employment, housing and education. Another serious problem African countries were experiencing was an influx of refugees forced from their countries because of armed conflict. Despite the assistance provided by the international community through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to certain developing countries, the host countries continued to experience intolerable pressure, which undermined their development. Under the best of conditions, such assistance covered barely 25 per cent of the needs of refugees. The international community must therefore redouble its efforts to solve that problem by addressing its root causes and taking the necessary measures to prepare for the reintegration of refugees into their countries of origin, or failing that, to integrate them into their host countries.

20. The matter of displaced persons and refugees could be settled only with the participation of the international community as a whole in establishing plans for integrated economic and social development through increased financial and technical cooperation.

21. **Mr. Hovhannisyan** (Armenia) said that his country had always attached the highest importance to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Armenia, which was located in an arid area with poor irrigation, faced intensive land degradation, which affected more than half of its territory. The lack of financial resources impeded the realization of scientific projects which could benefit not only Armenia, but also other countries experiencing drought. His Government had initiated a national action program to combat decertification and had signed an agreement on financial and technical assistance with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The programme's aim was to formulate the legislative basis for carrying out urgent measures, preventing further land degradation and restoring degraded lands. Decertification in Armenia had a negative impact on the whole region. That was why his Government attached special importance to regional and subregional cooperation in combating desertification. The Convention was the most important international instrument for combating desertification and drought, and constituted the most essential mechanism for providing assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Armenia therefore supported the elaboration of an additional regional instrument which would cover the specific problems of the countries of the Central and Eastern Europe region. His delegation had presented a draft additional regional implementation annex to the Convention.

22. Protecting the environment entailed significant costs. Therefore, adequate resources should be made available to the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Implementation of the Convention would help to preserve the planet's environment for future generations.

23. **Mr. Andjaba** (Namibia) recalled the importance that developing countries attached to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa. All the African countries had ratified the Convention because of their belief that if soil erosion and land degradation remained

unchecked, the future of millions of people would be jeopardized.

24. Namibia, like all African countries, believed that the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification should be synchronized with the implementation of other conventions such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity. His delegation supported the institutional role of the Global Mechanism in mobilizing resources for the implementation of the Convention, assisting developing countries to conclude partnership agreements with donor countries, and helping national governments to prepare their national action programmes. Despite the complexity of the problem of desertification and land degradation, and notwithstanding its implications for a large number of countries, the international community possessed the financial resources as well as the scientific and technical know-how required to implement the Convention to Combat Desertification in line with the principles of Agenda 21.

25. The main thrust of Namibia's national action programme to combat decertification was that the social, economic, legal and political environment should be reconciled with the natural environment in order to enhance the sustainable use of natural resources. To that end, Namibia had instituted specific rural development programmes whose aim was to increase the production of food crops and introduce environmentally sound technology and sustainable farming methods. Another programme sought to implement a nationwide framework for the management of resources designed to combat desertification and provide support to farmers and rural communities to ensure that their agricultural practices were productive and sustainable.

26. With regard to paragraph 18 of the Secretary-General's report (A/54/96), his delegation strongly endorsed decision 3/COP.2 of the second session of the Conference of the Parties concerning the provision of conference services.

27. **Ms. Quarless** (Jamaica) said that her delegation associated itself with the statements made by Barbados on behalf of CARICOM, Samoa on behalf of AOSIS, and Guyana, as Chairman of the Group of 77 and China. The special session of the General Assembly for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States had represented a watershed, since it had focused international attention on the special circumstances of small island developing States and had helped to mobilize support. Implementation of the Programme of Action was of central importance to the long-term viability of the ecosystems and economies of small island developing States.

28. The review had showed modest effort on the part of the small island developing States themselves to implement the Barbados Programme of Action, which identified many areas for priority attention, including climate change, natural disasters, fresh water, coastal and marine resources, tourism development and capacity-building. The review had also revealed that much still remained to be done. The international community should become fully engaged in the efforts of the small island States. Jamaica welcomed the support demonstrated at the special session, especially the contribution of the Government of Norway towards the strengthening of the Small Island Developing States Unit in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Her delegation welcomed that spirit of partnership, which was crucial for the small island developing States which, because of their size and vulnerabilities, were not masters of their own destiny in the international arena. They sought to secure the welfare of their people and protect their environment. However, that goal could not be achieved without the support of the international community.

29. In order to make headway in the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, work on the preparation of a vulnerability index should be concluded. The frequency of natural disasters in the small island developing States wrought havoc on medium- to long-term programmes for infrastructural development, and stalled the progress of tourism and agriculture, which were crucial to the economies of those countries. Susceptibility to natural disasters was complicated by ecosystem fragility. Sea level rise was claiming the coastlines and coral bleaching from the warming of the oceans was destroying coral reefs and, with them, the coastal resources. The economic weaknesses of small island developing States were well known: narrow economic base, low levels of diversification, heavy dependence on external trade; shortage of skilled manpower; and the brain drain. Those characteristics made them very vulnerable. In the context of globalization and trade liberalization, marginalization was frighteningly real. Preferential market access was being eroded in the name of free trade, and the small island States did not have enough time to adapt so as to benefit from the opportunities presented by globalization. She therefore welcomed the ongoing work in the United Nations, UNCTAD and other international forums on the development of a vulnerability index. It advocated the early conclusion of work on that index with a view to its application as a criterion for determining the eligibility of small island developing States for concessional multilateral

financing, and for addressing the question of special and differential treatment for small island developing States in multilateral trade negotiations.

30. The cooperation of the international community was also required on many other fronts. Thus, reduction in greenhouse gas emissions was essential in order to retard climate change and sea level rise, and to prevent the destruction of coral reefs. The small island developing States must benefit from the transfer of technology and assistance in strengthening their institutional capacities and developing their human resources.

31. At a donors' meeting, held in 1999, the small island developing States had submitted over 300 projects for operationalizing the Barbados Programme of Action. It was now essential to develop a strategy for their implementation, and for mobilizing the necessary resources. All actors in the international community, including governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, must work to achieve the goals established. Cooperation among small island developing States was equally important. In that connection, her delegation called for continued support by the international community for SIDSNET and SIDSTAP. She also expressed appreciation to the Government of Singapore for its important contribution to human resource development in the small island developing States through the technical cooperation programme.

32. The Caribbean States had taken the opportunity during the special session to introduce a draft resolution calling for the recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area in the Context of Sustainable Development. Her delegation hoped that the resolution would be adopted by the Second Committee.

33. **Mr. Iddi** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his delegation supported the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Desertification continued to prevent many developing countries from attaining sustained economic growth and sustainable development, particularly as it rendered sterile large areas of agricultural land on which those countries depended for their subsistence.

34. Desertification was a global problem. It was therefore imperative that the international community should accord the global mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, the priority it deserved. In order to be effective, the mechanism must have the support of the international community and the problem of lack of resources must be resolved.

35. The African countries requested the international community to assist them in capacity-building, particularly with regard to the acquisition of the knowledge and skills needed to combat desertification. Financial assistance was also crucial.

36. The efforts made by the small island developing States at the national and regional levels had not been adequately complemented by the international community, despite the commitment undertaken during the global conference to implement the Programme of Action. The United Republic of Tanzania included Zanzibar, an island which enjoyed autonomy in certain economic sectors such as trade, investment and tourism. It was therefore directly concerned by the problems of small island developing States and would continue to request the international community to mobilize adequate financial resources and technical assistance to help those countries overcome their development constraints.

37. **Mr. Shihab** (Maldives) expressed his delegation's support for the statements made on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States and the Group of 77 and China. Nearly ten years after the Earth Summit and five years after the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, a number of small island developing States, such as Maldives, were still struggling with extremely vulnerable economies and the threat of environmental disaster. The special session of the General Assembly for a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action had revealed that, while some progress had been made, the objectives of the Programme were still far from being attained.

38. The Barbados Programme of Action specified national, regional and international responsibilities. At the national level, Maldives had taken several steps to encourage the adoption of sustainable practices and to protect the archipelago's very fragile natural habitat. For example, legislation on environmental protection had been enacted in 1994; guidelines on waste management in the tourism industry had been strengthened; the use of fishing nets had been banned; and certain marine areas had been designated as national parks.

39. There were limits, however, to what a small island developing State could do on its own, particularly with regard to protecting itself against the side effects of global phenomena such as global warming and sea level rise. In Maldives, environmental degradation continued unabated. Beach erosion, salt water intrusion, and coral bleaching were intensifying. The efforts of Maldives to protect its

environment and promote sustainable development could not be successful without the support of the international community. At the regional level, Maldives and other members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation had made the environment a core area for cooperation. The Association had already carried out regional studies on natural disasters and the greenhouse effect and had adopted an environment action plan. Maldives was currently studying the feasibility of establishing a coastal zone management centre for South Asia. Those measures were promising first steps but were not sufficient to resolve the country's problems.

40. It was regrettable that the official development assistance received by Maldives and the majority of the small island developing States was declining at a time when it was needed most to address new environmental and economic challenges. Maldives called on the international community to honour its commitments under the Barbados Programme of Action and to establish a true partnership with the small island developing States in order to promote their sustainable development.

41. **Mr. Aboud** (Comoros) said that his delegation supported the statements made on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Association of Small Island States. The most frightening consequence of climate change was sea level rise. In Maldives and Seychelles, the sea had already engulfed historic sites, cemeteries and atolls. In Kiribati and Micronesia, the drinking water supply was affected by the intrusion of salt water. Given the seriousness of those problems, the international community and the States concerned must make a common effort.

42. The small island developing States were a habitat for rare flora and fauna. Their marine and land biodiversity was very great; however, their ecosystems were fragile and threatened. The overexploitation of the marine environment and the use of traditional fishing techniques that were sometimes very harmful endangered marine resources. The urgency of the situation had led the Comoros to add an environmental dimension to its economic policy. The national environment policy was aimed at promoting the sound use of natural resources, preserving biodiversity, developing environmental knowledge, promoting the conservation and restoration of forest resources and introducing appropriate marine and coastal management. It was also aimed at defining policies on national physical planning, water supply, sanitation and waste management. With assistance from the Global Environment Facility, UNDP and other organizations, the Comoros had elaborated a biodiversity conservation project.

43. The main export products of the Comoros were traditional and high value-added agricultural products, such as vanilla and ylang-ylang. That sector was experiencing serious difficulties owing to the deterioration in the terms of trade, the poor competitiveness of farming operations and competition. And yet, in the developing countries, the majority of the population was employed in agriculture. The failure of agricultural production could jeopardize food security and impede sustainable development efforts.

44. The Comoros hoped that the deliberations of the World Trade Organization would take into account the needs of small island developing States with a view to avoiding the adverse impact of the liberalization of agricultural products on the sustainable development of those States.

45. **Mr. Diallo** (Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa) said that the Conference of the Parties had expressed the view that the General Assembly should be asked to help cover the costs of financing the Fourth and Fifth Conferences of the Parties. With respect to cooperation, the Convention secretariat had endeavoured to cooperate with United Nations agencies, including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and was in the process of concluding cooperation arrangements with GEF and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Furthermore, every effort would be made to establish coordination between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

46. *Mr. Niculescu (Romania), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

Agenda item 99: Sustainable development and international economic cooperation (*continued*)

(h) Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (*continued*) (A/54/442)

47. **Ms. Sadik** (United Nations Population Fund), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (A/54/442), said that the special session had been considered an outstanding success

for two reasons: it had achieved global consensus through open, transparent discussion and had marked the end of five years of fruitful progress in implementing the Programme of Action of the Cairo Conference on Population and Development. The special session had benefited greatly from the guidance provided by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Commission on Population and Development and the Executive Board of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). It had also provided a framework for close cooperation among the organizations of the United Nations system, particularly the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and with intergovernmental organizations and civil society groups. Member States had participated very constructively in all phases of the review and appraisal process, providing data on the status of implementation of the Programme of Action in their countries and taking part in various technical symposiums and in The Hague Forum. The special session had adopted by consensus a document that identified key measures for the further implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action (A/S-21/5/Add.1), which validated the comprehensive approach to population and development issues and provided a set of new interim benchmarks for achievement of the goals of the Conference and reduction of vulnerability to human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS).

48. The special session had called on governments to make every effort to achieve the goals of the Programme of Action with regard to adolescent sexual and reproductive health and to include education on population and health, including reproductive health, in both formal and non-formal schooling. The participants in the special session had recognized that the AIDS epidemic was worse than had been anticipated and had expressed their commitment to taking urgent action to address the problem; they had also stressed the need to give priority to the reduction of maternal morbidity and mortality. Abortion had again been treated as a public health problem, and it had been acknowledged that the way to avoid abortion was to provide access to family planning and contraceptive methods. The participants had reiterated the four central components of sexual and reproductive health: family planning, maternal health, prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS prevention. They had also recognized the reproductive health needs of women and adolescents in emergency situations and had called on governments to provide reproductive health services among other basic social services.

49. The report on the 1998 UNFPA field inquiry had shown that countries were making considerable progress towards the achievement of conference goals by, *inter alia*, integrating population concerns into development strategies; making the necessary institutional changes to facilitate implementation of the Programme of Action; and improving partnerships between governments and civil society. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were becoming increasingly involved in policy formulation, and parliamentarians in several countries were working to adopt legislation on reproductive health and rights. Women's participation at the decision-making level had increased in several countries, and various States had passed legislation outlawing violence against women and, in particular, harmful practices such as female genital mutilation. However, a number of problems persisted, including the feminization of poverty, gender-based violence and trafficking in women and girls.

50. The most serious obstacle to implementation of the Programme of Action of the Cairo Conference was the shortfall in funding, although the Conference had endorsed the sum of $17 billion by the year 2000, roughly what the world spent each week on armaments. UNFPA would strive, together with all its partners, to enhance country capacity to meet the Conference goals and would work with countries and the donor community to augment the funds available for population issues. It would continue to cooperate with the United Nations system and organizations of civil society and would endeavour to broaden the role of the private sector. It was also useful to work closely with the participants in the special sessions marking the five-year reviews of the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and Habitat II. The birth of the six billionth person on 12 October 1999 had provided an opportunity to assess the progress achieved during the past three decades and to consider measures to be taken. It was particularly important to meet the needs of young people aged 15 to 24, who numbered over a billion, and of older persons. UNFPA, which would celebrate its thirtieth anniversary in 1999, was ready to join its partners in helping countries to implement the Programme of Action of the Conference and to carry out the directives of the special session.

51. **Ms. Ameer** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, paid a tribute to the contribution of UNFPA to a better understanding of population and development issues and to an improved quality of life. The International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in 1994, had emphasized the connection between population and development, and the twenty-first special session of the

General Assembly on the five-year review of the Conference had recognized the considerable efforts made, particularly by developing countries, to implement the Programme of Action. It was essential to increase the international financial resources available for that purpose.

52. On 12 October 1999, the world's population had reached six billion, but half of those people lived in poverty without the benefits of family planning, education, proper nutrition, safe drinking water or decent housing. The goals set at the Conference would not be reached without the elimination of poverty. The Group of 77 and China therefore hoped that the current generation of young people, better educated and informed, would play a major role in addressing those challenges. They welcomed the legislative and institutional measures undertaken by governments and the policy changes made in the areas of population and development. The advancement of the Cairo Agenda should respect the sovereign right of each country to implement it according to its own priorities and perceptions. Population and development policies based on quality of life should also incorporate issues such as poverty, food security, resource use and environmental impact. According to UNFPA, the five-year review had shown that the goals of the conference were not only practical and realistic, but essential to balanced development.

53. It was impossible to ignore the effects on development that resulted from the ageing of the population, external and internal migration, HIV/AIDS and discrimination and violence, particularly against women and girls. The Group of 77 and China therefore recommended the establishment of benchmarks in the following areas: reproductive health, maternal and child mortality, prevention of HIV/AIDS, gender equality and education. Those were the key elements of an informed approach to global population and development priorities for the twenty-first century and should be addressed in the context of an enabling economic, social and cultural environment at the national and international levels.

54. **Ms. Paivoke** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union and the Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, said that the European Union attached great importance to the implementation of the actions agreed during the special session of the General Assembly. The United Nations had a key role to play in that regard, in partnership with Governments, civil society and multilateral organizations. The special session provided the opportunity to reaffirm the human rights-based approach adopted during the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994. Reproductive and sexual rights were closely linked to other universal rights. Gender equity was an essential element of the Programme of Action and much remained to be done in order to achieve the goals that had been established in order to guarantee women and girls the full enjoyment of their rights. The special session had produced many positive results: a growing number of countries had taken measures to integrate population concerns into their development strategy. It was crucial that Governments should invest in integrated health care programmes that included maternal care because maternal mortality was still alarmingly high in many countries.

55. The special session had agreed on a target for reducing the vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. At least 90 per cent of young men and women aged 15 to 24 should have access to preventive methods, voluntary testing and counselling by 2005, and by 2010, at least 95 per cent of that age group should have access to such services. Governments were responsible for creating favourable political conditions for dealing with the problem of population and development, but the European Union recognized that international resources had to be mobilized in order to support the efforts that had already been undertaken. Political commitment was a prerequisite for progress. The European Union also wished to emphasize that the population issue influenced every aspect of development and that Governments should continue to examine the economic and social implications of demographic change and the age pyramid, including ageing of the population. There was a very close connection between population, sustainable development, empowerment of women and eradication of poverty.

56. **Mr. Farar** (United States of America) said that the review of the Cairo Programme of Action had shown that the Programme was working but that some significant challenges still remained. The special session had produced a set of recommendations to help implement it, which had been successful given that maternal and infant mortality rates had declined throughout the world, the education of girl children had improved, employment opportunities for women had increased, and individuals and couples had more choices in their reproductive lives. Governments in all regions of the world had committed themselves to achieving the goals set in Cairo and to ensuring an improved quality of life for their citizens, which was all the more important at a time when the world population had exceeded six billion. The special session had emphasized the need to address the escalating HIV/AIDS pandemic more directly, since more than 33 million people were infected with HIV and there were over 8 million AIDS orphans.

57. The special session had also shown that it was necessary to pay greater attention to young people and their needs. More than half the world population, or 3 billion people, were under 25 years of age and their decisions would determine the future of the planet. Moreover, the special session had recalled that there was still an acute need for resources to achieve the objectives of the Cairo Programme of Action. The United States was still the largest bilateral donor of aid for population activities, although it had not done all it could to meet the commitments of Cairo. Its overseas development assistance had continued to decline during recent years and political pressures had caused difficulties in mobilizing all the resources needed to fully implement the Programme of Action. Nevertheless, the Government was seeking ways to increase funding for Cairo priorities and hoped to be able to restore contributions to the United Nations Population Fund. It greatly valued the involvement of non-governmental organizations in the development and implementation of policies and programmes that would allow the Cairo Programme of Action to be executed. It was glad to see that, during the special session, all Governments had renewed their commitment to the goals and priorities of the Programme of Action, the relevant aspects of the Beijing Platform for Action had been taken into account and key actions for the next 15 years had been developed.

58. **Mr. Escanero** (Mexico) said that his country's population policy, which respected the principles and recommendations of the Cairo Conference, was characterized by a long-term perspective in line with national development priorities, while strictly respecting fundamental rights and freedoms. Results had been encouraging because, over the past 25 years, the number of children in a family had declined from 7 to 2.5 on average, while life expectancy had increased from 62 to 75 years of age and the rate of natural growth had declined from 3.3 to 1.8 per cent a year. The continuation of such efforts was guaranteed by well-established national programmes on population, empowerment of women, reproductive health and family planning, together with measures to combat domestic violence. Major institutional reforms had been undertaken, as well as intensive mobilization of resources to guarantee universal access to high-quality reproductive health services, especially with regard to family planning, perinatal health, adolescent reproductive and sexual health and women's health. Furthermore, measures had been taken to guarantee and promote the equality of women at all levels.

59. During the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly, data on experiences had been exchanged, shortfalls had been measured and a series of important decisions that would strengthen the implementation of the Programme of Action had been adopted. Accordingly, it was necessary to provide more support for national efforts and to increase international cooperation and mobilization of the financial resources needed to advance in priority areas such as reproductive health, maternal mortality, family planning and reducing the number of abortions, the needs of adolescents, and AIDS prevention. His delegation was grateful for the role of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) over the past 30 years in developing an approach that integrated population goals and activities into sustainable development objectives. His Government was determined to continue collaborating with UNFPA in all areas, particularly within the framework of the interregional South-South cooperation initiative for which it was one of the four centres of excellence.

60. **Mr. Kolby** (Norway) said that the General Assembly special session had made it possible to determine specific guidelines on several issues, particularly on reducing maternal morbidity and mortality, an issue which had so far been rather neglected and one which called for specific and practical measures — which were now known to be effective — to be taken.

61. The provision of adequate sexual and reproductive health services and information for young people was also of great importance as young people were particularly vulnerable, especially to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmissible diseases, whose incidence amongst 15- to 19-year-olds was increasing. But young people often did not feel welcomed by health services generally and did not seek out the information and services they needed. Teenage pregnancies were on the rise, meaning that many girls had to leave school early and were exposed to increased risk of maternal mortality, often as a result of unsafe abortions. Future actions would help resolve those problems by reaffirming the need for youth-friendly, confidential services and for the provision of information in schools, and by giving young people a say in the planning and implementation of government programmes.

62. The goals set at the Cairo Conference were still far from being reached, but there had been manifest progress in many areas. In most countries, policies were changing and had become clearly more people-oriented. The world's population had just passed six billion, but the actual number was less important than the concern to defend human rights, improve the quality of life for everyone and achieve sustainable development. Collective ambitions must be backed up with the necessary financial resources. The Government of Norway would continue to give high priority to population issues in its development cooperation, as it had

done since the late 1960s. Norway had therefore contributed its share towards the targets of the Programme of Action as a whole. Both the developed and the developing countries should also honour their commitments.

63. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh) commended Ms. Nafis Sadik, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), for her exemplary role in the work of the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. He himself had been Chairman of the Preparatory Committee and in that capacity had been led to the conclusion that the worth of any document lay in the contribution it could make to achieving specific objectives. Several United Nations bodies and a broad range of civil society organizations had participated in the round tables, technical meetings and the international forum in The Hague which had been organized with the special session in view. The negotiation had led to results, specifically to a comprehensive document containing an appraisal of the actions taken and defining actions to be taken in the future (A/S-21/5/Add.1) including in the area of the linkages between population and sustainable development. The document gave due regard to efforts towards gender equality; the need for women's empowerment; affirming women's rights; the need for an end to discrimination against the girl child; the needs of young people; and, more generally, the comprehensive achievement of the purposes and principles laid down in Cairo. Several time-bound targets had been set for reducing female illiteracy and specific aspects of reproductive health and obstetric care and for combating HIV/AIDS.

64. However, more resources would be needed if those purposes and principles were to be achieved, and it had been a surprising finding that domestic resource mobilization in the developing countries for implementing the Cairo Programme of Action had outpaced international support, which was falling further behind. Efforts must therefore be redoubled to obtain sufficient resources to implement the goals of the Cairo Conference, which would be reviewed once again for the tenth anniversary of the Conference, in 2004.

65. **Mr. Hamad** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) hailed the report of the Secretary-General (A/54/442) and recalled that by mandate UNESCO dealt also with population issues. It did so by carrying out research, information, education and communication activities aimed at encouraging attitudes favouring responsible behaviour in the population/development area, especially in the field of gender equality, the family and the environment. He gave a brief overview of the various specific activities UNESCO had carried out since 1994, including interdisciplinary projects and the publication of regional maps and manuals on population, the environment and development aimed at all levels of formal education. UNESCO had also issued a monograph on education and population dynamics which advocated education programmes in support of a strategy covering the population problem and the problem of sustainable human development. The monograph looked at the multiple interactions between population dynamics and education, in the broadest sense, and suggested how education could help raise awareness of the problems of development and demographic transition. UNESCO would continue to participate in the inter-agency mechanisms set up to provide follow-up to the major United Nations conferences, including the Cairo Conference.

66. **Mr. Malhoutra** (India) associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Guyana, Chairperson of the Group of 77 and China. India had participated actively in the preparation of the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly and in all the technical meetings and regional consultations, as well as in the Hague Forum which had preceded the special session. India had also taken that opportunity to conduct an in-depth review of the results of its own implementation of the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The review had been reorganized on the basis of an integrated approach to the problems of reproductive and child health, which holistically emphasized health needs as well as quality of service and user satisfaction. An objective system of monitoring by professional agencies ensured that those services were adequate to meet the needs. Special efforts had been made to improve access to services and provide broader choices, particularly for women, adolescents, economically disadvantaged social groups, tribal populations and slum-dwellers. The basic principle was the participation of all stakeholders, by means of the decentralization of decision-making.

67. Concerted efforts had been made to protect the girl child. Parliament had enacted legislation banning sex determination of the foetus. Education of girls and women was advancing. The current five-year plan included efforts towards the empowerment of women through the creation of an enabling environment, designed with the full participation of women's representatives, and with legislative support and the requisite policies and programmes. Women's rates of participation at higher levels

of employment and in professional education were also increasing.

68. The pattern of population growth and structure in India showed the need to focus on the needs of adolescents as well as on the ageing population. A youth policy had been developed to provide increased access for young people to information and services, particularly in the areas of reproductive health and drug abuse, while at the same time promoting educational opportunities, particularly in the professional area. A policy for the aged had also been recently developed, covering economic support, shelter, health, and the role of the aged in development activities.

69. In pursuing the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, it was important to maintain a holistic approach. It would be undesirable to fragment the actions to be taken among different bodies. The additional resources essential for the attainment of the agreed goals should therefore be made available. India had met its commitments in that regard, but several other countries had found it difficult to do so. India especially urged the donor countries and United Nations agencies to support the efforts required to implement the ICPD Programme of Action.

70. The special session had made possible a useful identification of ways to move forward comprehensively in all areas covered in the ICPD Programme of Action. It was therefore surprising that the report (A/54/442) had not included the principles defined in document A/S-21/5/Add.1 regarding the need to sustain economic growth in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, especially by promoting an equitable, secure, non-discriminatory and predictable trading system, reducing the debt burden, and ensuring that structural adjustment programmes were responsive to social, economic and environmental concerns.

71. The economic policies of a country did not exist in a vacuum. It was therefore necessary to ensure that the international scenario remained favourable to the efforts of the developing countries to achieve ICPD goals. India continued to believe that there was an urgent need for developing countries, with the assistance of the international community, to implement programmes which ensured a level of consumption for their citizens, especially the poor and disadvantaged, that met their basic needs.

72. Committed to increasing budget outlays in the social sector, India nevertheless continued to see the 20/20 initiative as a voluntary compact between interested donor and recipient countries, and not as a prescriptive formulation. What was required was a clear perception of ways to fulfill the commitments undertaken in Cairo by totalling the cost of each element in the package. India therefore agreed with the Secretary-General's view, as outlined in his report, that resource mobilization for population activities must be placed high on the agenda if the international community was to attain the goals it had established.

73. **Mr. Babar** (Pakistan) said that Pakistan supported the statement made by the representative of Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and noted that since the Conference interest had shifted from population numbers towards the idea of an overarching approach to the problems of population and development and to the deeply interlinked areas of literacy, education, health, environment, economic growth, equity and equality. More than ever, there was a need to create an enabling environment for individuals to make their own decisions on population issues.

74. Pakistan, the world's seventh most populous country, had sought to bring its policy into harmony with the objectives of the ICPD Programme of Action. The authorities had launched several new initiatives to expand access to reproductive health services. Those initiatives generally included gradual integration of family planning with reproductive health services, without fixed numerical targets and setting a voluntary approach for services and advocacy. Reproductive health indicators were improving in Pakistan, with appreciable declines in rates of fertility and of infant and maternal mortality. However, Pakistan's current population of 134 million posed numerous challenges.

75. Many developing countries were confronted with similar challenges. The concepts of the Programme of Action were being embraced reasonably quickly, as had been recognized during the five-year review carried out in June 1999, but the resources necessary to implement those concepts had not been made available to the developing countries. That lack of financial resources remained the principal obstacle to full implementation of the Programme of Action. Donor funding for population activities had stagnated and was far below the target of $17 billion that had been set for the year 2000.

76. The consequences of demographic projections were alarming for the developing countries. Over the next 25 years, population would increase by 2 billion, of whom 1.5 billion would still be living below the poverty line. The major reason for slow economic development was the lack of water. Food resources would have to double in the next 25 years to meet the demands of population and economic growth. It would therefore be necessary to prepare a

complete and coherent development financing strategy, which alone could provide a solution to those problems.

77. A number of ambitious numerical targets had been defined at the special session of the General Assembly. They could not be achieved without the attainment of the goals of development and sustained economic growth. The population problem could not be addressed in isolation. The Cairo consensus had demonstrated the integrated nature of population and development issues. Development had a direct impact on health, including reproductive health, as well as on other social sectors.

78. Population growth in the developing countries would have a global impact. The developed countries could not ignore that issue simply because they had been able to manage their population growth, and they would have to take effective measures to support the efforts of the developing countries to realize the goals of ICPD. It would be unfortunate if the breakthroughs on population issues made by the developing countries were to come to nothing because of a lack of international cooperation. Action was therefore urgently needed.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

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Summary record of the 23rd meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 26 October 1999, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Niculescu (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Romania)
later: Mr. Olhaye (Chairman) ..... (Djibouti)

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In the absence of Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti), Mr. Niculescu (Romania), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 99: Sustainable development and international economic cooperation

(h) Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (*continued*) (A/54/442)

1. **Ms. Berman** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that high population growth, particularly in developing countries, had created great increases in the labour supply, but since there had been no commensurate increase in employment opportunities vast numbers of people lacked the means to earn a living; this had had devastating social consequences. In the wake of the International Conference on Population and Development, ILO had played an active role in drafting instruments and conventions to protect vulnerable groups such as women, children and migrant workers.

2. The adoption of a human rights framework in the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development was consistent with the organization's own standards on human rights, including basic workers' rights. The organization sought to integrate gender concerns into policies and programmes, and its work on population and development also included programmes targeting specific groups, such as youth and women and the development of schemes aimed at enhancing employment opportunities. It had also undertaken advocacy activities to ensure that Governments, employers and workers' organizations were aware of the importance of population in development policies and programmes, and its link with employment.

3. The organization was the lead agency for a thematic study of employment and the changing age structure in the twenty-first century, which was part of the inter-agency Technical Assistance Programme. Recent ILO publications on HIV/AIDS and employment had dealt with the legislative and regulatory framework, enterprise practices and recommendations for practical strategies concerning HIV/AIDS and the workplace, and a number of regional workshops on the subject had been held involving ILO's tripartite constituents.

4. **Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) said that the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly had reaffirmed the consensus achieved in Cairo and demonstrated the growing attention being given to population parameters for development. Intensified action had been called for in respect of, *inter alia*, reduction of child and maternal mortality and increased access to schooling. The special session had also reaffirmed that there were different approaches to the population issue. His delegation was concerned about the inadequacy of internal and external resources support for the programmes and measures taken by Governments; it was unclear how Governments were to implement the Programme of Action in the absence of the relevant international support. It was also unclear whether or how the development of partnership relations with non-governmental organizations and institutions in civil society could replace specific official assistance. Measures to control population growth must not be used as conditions for granting assistance in other critical areas of growth and development.

5. His delegation welcomed the target indicators agreed on at the special session to combat illiteracy among women and girls, reduce maternal mortality and reduce the vulnerability of young people to the spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases. The Russian Federation also welcomed the recommendations regarding the elderly, the need to take firm action to halt the spread of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases and the implementation of women's and children's rights, as well as the clear recommendations regarding specific population problems which had become more acute in some countries with economies in transition, including the Russian Federation. It was particularly important to promote improved systems of gathering population data, especially in countries with economies in transition.

6. Concrete action must be taken on the recommendations concerning international support to countries which had suffered as a result of the recent financial crisis and countries with problems stemming from large refugee flows. The Russian Federation was prepared to cooperate with other interested countries in preparing a draft resolution at the present session to provide an impulse to implementation of the decisions of the special session.

7. **Mr. Abreha** (Ethiopia), said that the process to review and appraise the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development had made it abundantly clear that there was a need for strengthened international partnership but while developing countries were making concerted efforts to mobilize domestic resources for population activities, developed countries had thus far not done enough to fulfil their commitments. A serious lack of financial resources remained one of the primary obstacles to full implementation

of the Programme of Action. Ethiopia called on its partners to redouble their efforts to mobilize funds, and emphasized that the international community should provide the necessary financial and technical assistance to support developing countries, particularly those in Africa, and should address the debt crisis of developing countries through a more efficient and coordinated mechanism.

8. Ethiopia was the third most populous country in Africa, and population concerns were high on its development agenda; equality of women was prominent in every policy and programme. Ethiopia encouraged the participation of non-governmental organizations in the broad area of health and family planning. Despite improvements in contraceptive prevalence and fertility rates, daunting challenges lay ahead. There were not enough trained personnel in the population and related fields; there was a lack of national technical capacity to establish the relationship between population and development; and there were no methodological tools to integrate women's issues fully into the development planning process. The major obstacle to achieving the goals set in Ethiopia's national population policy was resource constraint.

9. On the eve of the new millennium, countries should rededicate themselves to implementing the Programme of Action, for full implementation of the Programme would improve hopes of prosperity, sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable economic growth and development.

10. **Mr. Shimumura** (Japan) said that the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly had shown that there was now a universal recognition of the importance of population issues and the need to tackle them in a coordinated manner. Acceptance of the need for a multi-disciplinary approach represented a great leap forward in the thinking of the international community. The concept of reproductive health and reproductive rights enjoyed much broader acceptance today than it had at the time of the Conference.

11. While it was significant that the political will had been mobilized to reaffirm the commitments made at Cairo, there had been insufficient discussion of how the goals should be attained and how progress should be monitored and evaluated. All countries, non-governmental organizations and international organizations concerned needed to be engaged in follow-up, and in that endeavour different methods of implementation, monitoring and evaluation that were sensitive to local cultural, political and religious traditions might be required, as well as active participation of the local population.

12. Since 1986, Japan had been the largest donor to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and in 1994 it had set out to allocate US$ 3 billion in Official Development Assistance for activities related to population and HIV/AIDS by the end of 1998; that target had already been exceeded. Japan would continue to attach high priority to population issues and was determined to continue to play an active role in collaborating and cooperating with other donor countries, international organizations and non-governmental organizations regarding issues relating to population and development.

13. **Mr. Robertson** (New Zealand), speaking also on behalf of Australia and Canada, said that the central message of the Cairo Conference — reinforced at the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly — was that population issues were development issues and that the Cairo agenda should be considered as part of a global framework for sustained and sustainable development. The special session's strong reinforcement of human rights and the human well-being language of the Programme of Action was particularly welcome, as were the calls for intensified action in implementing the Programme of Action, and the new benchmarks in reproductive and sexual health, access to family planning services, reduced maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS prevention, gender issues and education. New Zealand, Australia and Canada remained deeply committed to implementation of the Programme of Action, and urged all countries to implement the key actions agreed at the special session.

14. Despite the success of the special session formidable challenges remained in terms of availability of adequate resources, lack of political commitment and support at national and international levels and the all too common environment of gender inequality. Only by a partnership between developed and developing countries, Governments and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, indigenous peoples and the private sector, could those obstacles be overcome.

15. UNFPA had a crucial role to play in population and development. It had been particularly successful working in partnership and in bringing about a number of innovative projects which had helped greatly in bringing the benefits of sexual and reproductive health services to those most in need. It should receive continued support as the lead agency in implementing the Programme of Action and as the only multilateral agency carrying out the entire range of population and reproductive health activities set out in the Programme.

16. **Mr. Holubov** (Ukraine) said that his delegation fully subscribed to the outcome of the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly, particularly with regard to measures to reduce maternal and infant mortality levels, to combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases, to regulate migrant flows and to promote capacity-building in the developing countries and in countries with economies in transition. It also welcomed the emphasis on the link between population, economic growth and environment on the one hand and the urgent need for policies and programmes to deal with the causes of international and internal migration and urbanization and the resultant dislocations on the other hand.

17. Like other countries with economies in transition, Ukraine was experiencing a number of negative tendencies in its social and demographic development. The most serious threat to the health of the Ukrainian nation stemmed from the HIV/AIDS pandemic and from a significant growth in venereal diseases, including venereal infection of newborn children. Along with the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster, those factors had caused the population of Ukraine to fall by almost 2 million in the past five years.

18. In recognition of the fact that Governments had prime responsibility for attaining the goals of the International Conference on Population and Development at national level, Ukraine had taken steps to make the Programme of Action an integral part of its social and development policy. Ukraine particularly welcomed a recent visit by the Executive Director of UNFPA; despite its lack of financial resources, UNFPA had made significant progress in implementing the Programme of Action and he shared the concern of other delegations regarding the continuing serious decline in its core resources.

19. **Mr. van Schalkwyk** (South Africa) welcomed the outcome of the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly and said that the Cairo Programme of Action was of special significance to his country in view of the widespread suffering and marginalization it had experienced over a period of more than four decades. His Government's efforts to improve the socio-economic situation of its people were being hampered by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, unsafe abortions and teenage pregnancies, and had it not been for the international assistance and guidance of the Programme of Action his Government would have found it infinitely more difficult to deal with them. In the past five years the country had begun to incorporate the Programme of Action in its national plan for social development.

20. While acknowledging that the outcome of the twenty-first special session was probably the best that could be achieved, his delegation would have preferred more forward-looking and action-oriented proposals for further implementation of the Programme of Action. It noted with concern the continuing decline in contributions to UNFPA; ever-decreasing levels of donor support were threatening to wipe out the gains the Fund had made. It was sad to note that seven of the top 15 donors to UNFPA had reduced their contributions in 1998, while another five had either marginally increased or provided the same level of contribution. Only three countries had made any serious effort to increase their contributions. His delegation strongly urged donor Governments to increase their contributions to UNFPA in order to help realize the goals and objectives of the International Conference on Population and Development.

21. **Mr. Li Shijian** (China), noting that the world population had recently reached 6 billion, said that it should be seen both as a milestone in human development and as a warning that more resolute action was needed to slow the pace of population growth. Developed and developing countries should work together to solve the population problem.

22. Although the international community and national Governments had made progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action, many couples still did not have access to basic reproductive health and family planning services, and official development assistance for population programmes had been cut drastically. His delegation therefore appealed to all countries to honour the commitments made at the Cairo Conference and to bear in mind at all times the relationship that existed between population, economic and social development, resources and the environment.

23. Since China had the largest population of any country in the world, it regarded family planning and control of population growth as vital. Although it had significantly reduced the birth rate in the past 30 years, it still faced tremendous population pressure which, in the future, would be coupled with problems of aging, employment, demographic structure and migration. Accordingly, it had formulated a number of instruments and plans to address the problem in the twenty-first century and it looked forward to strengthening its cooperation with the international community and making its contribution to stabilizing the world population and promoting peace and development.

24. **Mr. Zarie Zare** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the Programme of Action of the Cairo Conference had established an organic link between population and development. The five-year review of its implementation had demonstrated the capacity of the United Nations in global

consensus-building through open, transparent and inclusive discussion.

25. Data on domestic resource flows for population indicated that developing countries had made substantial progress in achieving the goals set in Cairo, but the same could not be said for international assistance. Donor funding for population activities had stagnated and was far below the requirements for 2000. Successful implementation of the key actions and outcomes of the Cairo review process was contingent upon success in resource mobilization.

26. His Government based its strategy for reproductive health and family planning on the promulgation of appropriate legislation, promotion of public awareness and provision of necessary services, particularly directed at young couples. The Government's commitment to the strategy, along with the strengthening of the national primary health care system, had led to sharp declines in the crude birth rate, along with tremendous reductions in infant, child and maternal mortality. Despite serious financial constraints, the health care system and reproductive health services had also been extended to some 2 million refugees present in the country. Assistance from the international community was needed, however, in order for those services to be sustainable. Empowerment of women was another Government policy which had contributed significantly to the success of population policies. Women's active involvement in the health sector represented an important aspect of their active and growing role on the national scene. Finally, the formulation, adoption and implementation of population policies in Iran, with recognized success, confirmed the compatibility of religion and population policies and family planning, with important theoretical and practical lessons for other developing societies.

27. **Mr. Chamie** (Department of Economic and Social Affairs) noting that the twenty-first special session of the General Assembly had been one of the most successful sessions, drew attention to paragraph 30 of the report of the Secretary-General.

28. **Ms. Sadik** (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) underscored the call by many delegations for adequate resources for population activities. She was encouraged by the statements made by delegations of major donors to population activities that they would restore funding. In turn, her small but dedicated staff would redouble its efforts for implementation of those activities.

29. *Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti), Chairman, took the Chair.*

Agenda item 104: Globalization and interdependence (A/54/98, 175 and 358)

30. **Mr. Desai** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence (A/54/358), said that it was intended to move the discussion beyond the level of concepts and to enhance the capacity of the international community to manage the globalization process through the instruments available.

31. The two major challenges posed by globalization were policy coherence and institutional governance. Currently, there was no mechanism to harmonize policy among countries affected by each other's actions at the macro-economic level, for instance, or to govern the interactions between areas of policy, for example finance and trade. In the area of institutional governance, transnational actions were becoming increasingly prevalent in such areas as finance, information and movements of people. The challenge lay in deciding whether a mechanism to address such actions was needed at the national level, or across national boundaries.

32. In his view, the priority for the Committee's deliberations should be to promote global understanding of the phenomenon of globalization, as perceptions varied enormously. There were three main areas to address. First, it must be recognized that globalization was driven by the recent dramatic changes in information technology and knowledge-based industries. In the past, the Committee had handled that area as a technical matter; in fact, it was much more, and competence to address it must be built at the inter-governmental level. Second, globalization was being driven not by official capital flows, but by private capital markets; rule-setting and institutional development surrounding such flows should be an important part of the work of the United Nations. Third, globalization had been driven by the expansion of trade, multinational corporations and the globalization of production. Answers to the questions raised by those processes must be sought at the global level.

33. Finally, there were two main areas of concern: one related to the belief that there was no system of oversight for the process, the other to the fact that globalization was not affecting all countries equally. The response to those concerns should be to strengthen the operational activities of the United Nations for capacity-building in information technology, capital market development and trade. The challenge before the Second Committee was to provide the

architecture for the discussions of those very important issues.

34. **Mr. Insanally** (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that globalization continued to dominate the world economy. Fuelled by the technology revolution and the increasing liberalization of trade and finance, the process was rapidly transforming the world into a single global marketplace. While its effects extended into the daily lives of people everywhere, the process itself had engendered in many a sense of powerlessness and loss of control. The results to date had been very mixed; most developing countries had experienced few gains and, in fact, had suffered significant losses.

35. It had also become clear that each country was vulnerable to the process in varying degrees, and thus, any strategy to manage globalization must be responsive to their specific needs and circumstances. In particular, safety mechanisms were needed to protect the most vulnerable sectors of society. The inadequacy of existing international institutions to deal with the underlying systemic deficiencies of the global economy had led to demands for the reform or redesign of the international financial architecture. Developing countries would continue to insist on a greater role in the decision-making, as they generally suffered disproportionately as a result of adverse shocks in the global economy.

36. Integration should take place at a pace designed to allow developing countries to withstand the unbridled competition of the market and to benefit from globalization and trade liberalization in a smooth and stable manner. Human resource development, capacity-building and leadership were urgently needed. National policies should combine offensive measures to attract investment and trade with defensive measures to guard against the predominant forces of the open market. New forms of partnership for development among Governments, the private sector and civil society would also be required.

37. On the plus side, globalization and interdependence had provided a new dynamic for South-South cooperation. An important process which had paralleled globalization had been the broadening and deepening of integration at the regional and subregional levels. Such arrangements offered a welcome buffer against global market forces and allowed countries to pool their resources and develop their productive capacities.

38. The United Nations had a crucial role to play in promoting an understanding of and a response to globalization. The recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General were worthy of consideration. Of particular relevance was the idea of establishing a task force under the Economic and Social Council to find the ways and means to promote policy coherence and institutional capacity-building measures that would link the outcomes of the global conferences and the five-year reviews already held. The proposal for dialogue between the Council and the World Trade Organization was also timely. The Group of 77 and China supported efforts to strengthen the General Assembly in the discharge of its Charter responsibilities to provide int[illegible]national economic and social cooperation, and to advance the role and effectiveness of the specialized agencies related to social and economic development.

39. It was critically important for the international community to mobilize the determination to work closely together for the common goal of sustainable development in the spirit of cooperation and partnership. The Group of 77 and China would follow the discussions closely to see how developed and developing countries could come together to harness globalization for the good not of a select few, but of all countries in the global economy.

40. **Ms. Rasi** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, and, in addition, Iceland, said that globalization provided both opportunities and challenges. It was a many-faceted process, which included economic, political, social, environmental, technological and cultural dimensions. An effective framework for global governance required a new perspective, one that relied on a more comprehensive, coherent and coordinated approach to the various dimensions of sustainable development. Attention should also be given to equity and to a more equitable distribution of the benefits of globalization at the national and international level.

41. The responsibility for shaping globalization could not be left to the market forces alone. Now more than ever, there was need for political measures to accompany and guide globalization in order to spread its benefits more widely. Such measures should include effective global negotiation mechanisms, mainstreaming sustainable development considerations into all policy making and bringing greater coherence into trade, investment, environmental, social and other policies. Particular attention should also be given to the problem of poverty eradication and to preventing the further marginalization of developing countries. Indeed, the ability of national Governments and the international community to harness the beneficial forces of globalization for the eradication of poverty should be one of the major criteria for any lasting national and global response to globalization.

42. At the national level, an ability to adapt and respond adequately to pressures and opportunities for change, as well as stable and sustainable macroeconomic policies were necessary for taking full advantage of the opportunities provided by globalization. Regional cooperation and integration were also vital in that regard. However, the prime responsibility for development lay with States themselves. The support of the international community could only be considered supplementary, even if it was indispensable in the current circumstances. One of the key challenges was strengthening the institutional capacities of developing countries in order to take advantage of the opportunities of globalization. An integrated world economy offered the best opportunities for doing so.

43. Noting that the South-East Asian financial crisis had revealed the fragility of the financial system, she said that the victims of such crises would be helped in the long term through financial transparency and better practices, combined with the development of social structures to manage change. Therefore, the European Union welcomed the work of the United Nations and the World Bank in developing and refining principles and good practices in social policies. As far as trade and finance was concerned, the forthcoming round of trade negotiations in the context of the World Trade Organization (WTO) should be comprehensive and move the process of trade liberalization forward, strengthen the framework for the functioning of the multilateral trading system and ensure that the particular interests and concerns of developing countries were taken into account. The European Union also supported the ongoing process of strengthening and reforming the international financial architecture so as to contribute to crisis prevention and management. The Bretton Woods institutions should serve as a central forum for the discussions concerning the international financial system.

44. Challenges to global governance included the balance between the State and other public and private actors. Closer dialogue between countries and with the private sector, as well as with non-governmental organizations and other sectors of civil society, was indispensable. The European Union welcomed the efforts under way within the private sector to adopt codes of ethics conducive to political and social stability.

45. Intensified international cooperation increased the importance of the role of multilateral actors such as the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions, WTO and regional organizations. Such cooperation should take into account comparative advantages and the need to build partnerships with other institutions such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Participation in the emerging global information network was imperative for any country to benefit from globalization. The United Nations also had an important role in assisting developing countries in strengthening their human resources base to take advantage of global information technology, which would become a decisive factor in an increasingly interdependent world.

46. **Mr. Osei-Danquah** (Ghana) said that it was important to re-examine the items on the Committee's agenda in the light of interrelatedness as well as the prospect of enlarging participation in the dialogue with a view to concentrating global attention on the most critical but defining trends in world development.

47. Perhaps because of the role that hedge funds had played in the financial turmoil that had beset Asia, attention seemed to have focused entirely on the role of the financial aspects of globalization, overlooking other aspects, particularly trade and the interconnections between finance, trade and development. The common thread running through the various studies and reports on globalization and the new trends in Washington was the unprecedented urgency for an integrated focus on development. What had been left unsaid was how urgent it was for the United Nations to validate and assert its leadership in the process. The United Nations was the only body with the authority to lead the process of restructuring the international financing architecture and ensuring a stronger, more stable and participatory system. It was also equipped to design a coherent network of global governance that linked finance, trade and development. In that connection, he shared the view expressed in the Secretary-General's report regarding the need for comprehensive and coherent policy responses to globalization.

48. It was the responsibility of Governments and other social forces to ensure the promotion of goals of equity, poverty eradication and enhanced human security. The problems caused by economic globalization had exposed the inadequacies of the modern State, as well as of international institutions both in managing activities on the globalized markets and in preventing undesirable outcomes or addressing them in the most socially responsible manner, when they occurred. Strong and effective governance was therefore necessary if Governments were to have a chance of managing the consequences of globalization at home.

49. Similarly, strong and effective governance at the international level was needed to deal with aspects of globalization that remained outside the control of national governments, and to ensure that the sum of governmental action was as comprehensive as the demands of globalization

on policy. In that regard, the United Nations must provide the forum for identifying the respective responsibilities of developing countries, developed countries and multilateral institutions in governance. Effective governance would require a balance between implementation of national and global responsibilities. Moreover, the understandings that seemed to exist on development between the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank must be extended.

50. Unless the international community accepted the need to support States around the globe to become effective units of global governance, instead of victims of globalization, it would not just be billions of people who would pay the price in poverty and exclusion. The United Nations itself would be marginalized.

51. **Mr. Ortique** (United States of America) said that one of the most important elements to keep in mind when discussing how the United Nations adjusted to globalization while continuing to fulfil its objective of promoting development, was that the implications of globalization were not yet fully understood.

52. That being so, a number of things should be borne in mind. The first was the need for flexibility and a readiness to adjust. There had been much discussion about the need for new structures and architectures; in fact, the focus should be on evaluating and re-evaluating existing systems as they developed. The second thing to remember was that there were constants which must continue to be emphasized, namely health, education and basic infrastructure. There was a need to take a comprehensive, holistic and coherent approach to policy-making, stressing the interrelationship between economic, social and environmental factors. The third thing to remember was that the exponential increase in the availability of information, as well as the growing inequities in access to such information, must be taken into consideration. Access to information and the knowledge that sprang therefrom were the principal means by which individuals and Governments could take advantage of the opportunities and defend against the negative impact of globalization. The international community must work to improve access to information throughout the developing world and ensure that such information was wholly transparent. One method of dealing with the explosion and constant flow of information was to clearly identify priorities in respect of economic growth, social development and environmental protection and adhere to them.

53. In his delegation's view, the United Nations, particularly in its operational activities, should focus on the fundamentals, namely, health, education and basic infrastructure. The Organization could help countries lay the framework and support the development of essential skills, so that they could take advantage of the opportunities opened up by globalization. In that context, the need for continuing human resources development could not be overemphasized. Basic education was essential for individuals and countries to link up with the evolving system. In a world characterized by constant change and planned obsolescence, continuing education and training throughout an individual's life was an imperative. The United Nations also needed to build flexibility into its responses, which implied a willingness to depart from a business-as-usual approach, when necessary, and to at least consider change. Finally, the Organization provided a forum to discuss issues of concern in working towards common development goals. Rapid and accurate communication was essential in a world where events in one country or region were almost instantaneously transmitted around the globe. It was equally important, however, to be able to transmit the outcomes of discussions and debates in New York back to the decision makers in the capitals of every country.

54. **Mr. Isakov** (Russian Federation) said that globalization was an objective phenomenon that offered new development opportunities at the same time as it entailed risks. In order to cope with such risks, it was necessary to develop a concerted strategy of efficient management, adapt national economies to the conditions of globalization and ensure a fair use of its benefits by all countries, in the interest of ensuring economic growth and attaining the objectives of sustainable development. The growing interdependence of national economies as a result of the dynamic increase of transborder movements of goods, services and capital, and the intensive exchange of information and technologies, had led to pivotal changes in such fields as production, communications, foreign investment and finance.

55. While globalization had spawned a tremendous development of information technologies and was one of the driving forces behind the considerable growth of world trade and investment in recent times, it was also fraught with a number of dangers. The growing openness of some economies made them more vulnerable to adverse external effects and promoted the spread of local economic troubles to other regions of the world, as the recent financial crisis in Asia had demonstrated. Relatively slow economic growth and lower competitiveness in the areas of technology, information and human resources in developing countries and countries in transition had created additional difficulties in the process of adaptation to globalization. In that regard, reinforcing multilateral mechanisms of coordination of

macroeconomic policy in the interest of stability, predictability and global economic growth was necessary for effective management of the globalization process. In that context, the most important task was to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations and other multilateral institutions engaged in the complex issues of trade, finance and development. The consideration of problems of globalization should be carried out in a transparent manner and involve a large number of countries, multilateral institutions, business circles, the academic community and the public at large.

56. **Mr. Kim Hak-su** (Republic of Korea) said that globalization was not an option but a reality. The Asian financial crisis had raised legitimate concerns, and many developing countries had found themselves marginalized from the global system. The report of the Secretary-General (A/54/358) had aptly articulated two of the challenges posed by globalization: a lack of policy coherence at the national and international levels and inadequacies in the area of governance. The United Nations should continue to play a catalytic role in formulating coherent policy responses to the challenges posed by globalization and should strengthen its partnership with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization.

57. The Organization should give continued priority to helping developing countries adapt to the new opportunities arising from globalization with a focus on the use of information and communication technologies. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the choice of information technology as the theme of the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council for the year 2000.

58. While the free movement of goods and people would increase prosperity and complement cooperative frameworks in many areas, unchecked globalization would lead to a homogenization of consumption and production patterns and of cultural values. Therefore, the regional economic commissions should be strengthened and streamlined in order to assess the ramifications of globalization, taking into account the specific needs of each region.

59. He stressed the importance of a truly global partnership that would include all stakeholders in society and provide a stable environment through good governance, transparency and accountability at the national and international levels. He welcomed the Secretary-General's call for a Global Compact between the United Nations and the private sector and considered that the joint statement issued in July 1999 by the Secretary-General and the President of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) was an encouraging step towards the achievement of that goal.

60. **Mr. de Moura** (Brazil) said that globalization had been the result of extraordinary developments in communications systems dating from the 1960s. It was difficult to arrive at a common understanding of the nature, scope and implications of that process and of what to do about it. While the emergence of a global market had had a positive influence on growth and productivity in some countries, it had also widened inequalities at the national and international levels. Moreover, institutional and regulatory frameworks had not yet adjusted to the new realities and there was a need for multilateral cooperation, taking into account the interactions between trade, finance and macroeconomics and their integration with social concerns.

61. Expanding inequality and the growing risk of financial instability were among the most serious problems that the world faced. The United Nations and, in particular, the Economic and Social Council were uniquely suited to a comprehensive discussion aimed at making the potential benefits of globalization a reality for all. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions.

62. **Mr. Haque** (Pakistan) said that while the supporters of globalization claimed that it was a panacea for the economic problems of the developing countries and that everyone would eventually get a piece of the economic pie, that optimism was not shared by those left poorer by the process. The reality was that the world economy was not global. Trade, investment and financial flows were concentrated primarily in the developed blocs, and there was no transfer of resources from the developed to the developing countries.

63. Globalization was the newest form of economic colonialism; it made possible the efficient exploitation of vulnerable nations in the name of free markets and allowed transnational capitalists to rampage through the developing world, sometimes with the connivance, and even the active participation, of the rich elite of those poor countries. The vast, cheap labour pools of developing countries were being exploited, commodity prices were being manipulated in order to ensure a continued supply of cheap raw materials and the markets of developing countries were being pried open in the name of trade liberalization while the developed countries limited access to their own markets through various stratagems. International financial markets and rapid capital movement drained financial resources from newly emerging economies through currency speculation, and huge

transfers of resources from the developing to the developed economies continued unchecked.

64. Significantly, official development assistance (ODA), the most direct expression of international solidarity for development, continued to decline, and direct investment was concentrated in the developed world and a small number of developing countries. It had been well established that there was no substitute for development financing, yet the actions of the developed countries spoke louder than their words in support of the cause of development.

65. The proponents of globalization spoke of the interdependence of nations, the shared nature of their economies and the mutuality of their interests. In reality, however, the developed countries were not dependent on the developing world; Western corporations had major holdings in developing countries, and world bodies were dominated by the developed States. The developing countries, for their part, were dependent on limited overseas markets and exports and were at the mercy of the international financial institutions; they suffered the negative consequences of globalization but had virtually no role in defining the rules of the game, and their repeated calls for democratic governance of the global economy had fallen on deaf ears.

66. The argument that there was no alternative to globalization was a self-serving rationalization which allowed its proponents to denude poor countries of their resources. The push towards globalization was a triumph of capital over labour; the developed countries intervened on behalf of their multinational corporations to ensure the latter's smooth operation in the host countries, and the investments of those corporations were conditional on the granting of specific immunities for their activities, which gave them a licence to act independently of the economic regulations of the host countries.

67. Perhaps more tellingly, the dynamics of globalization had been fuelled by a massive growth of financial markets and a push to liberalize capital accounts, yet the developed countries did not apply those principles to their own markets. Major areas of export interest to developing countries were closed or protected through subsidies or by other means. There could be no level playing field between strong and weak economies without international regulatory measures to control the predatory policies of the more powerful players. Unfortunately, however, the measures being adopted worked to the further disadvantage of weak and vulnerable economies, and developing countries had little role in policy-making at the international trade conclaves.

68. Thus, globalization was a tool used by the powerful to plunder the fragile economies of the South in a thinly disguised attempt to create a new Western domination rooted in the absolute power of capital and the monopolization of technology.

69. **Mr. Malhoutra** (India) said that if globalization was to be meaningful at the national level, it must lead not only to enhanced trade and financial flows, but to improved quality of life. It was important to assess the impact of globalization on each developing country, taking into account differences in the economic and social capacities of the various States and regions and avoiding universal timetables for liberalization.

70. Overly hasty and ill-thought-out liberalization had led to massive unemployment and to a breakdown of social systems in developing economies that were not prepared for competition and the immediate impact of technological upgrades. Retraining of the labour force, investment in research, development and infrastructures and expansion of agriculture and agro-industries were crucial if developing countries were to be equipped to manage the challenges of globalization.

71. The recent financial crisis in South-East Asia had revealed deep-seated structural imbalances in the manner in which globalization and liberalization were shaping the global economy. For many, the debt crisis of the early 1980s had provided final proof that inward-oriented strategies and interventionist policies could not extricate developing countries from the mire of poverty and underdevelopment. It had been thought that trade liberalization would ensure the best allocation of resources according to comparative advantage, secure needed export revenues and attract foreign direct investment which, in turn, would promote domestic capital accumulation, technology transfer and capacity-building. However, the recent financial crisis had wiped out decades of economic growth and successful poverty eradication in the very developing countries that had most successfully integrated into the global economy. Moreover, the economic, social and human cost to those countries had had repercussions for the entire developing world, where growth had slowed from 6 per cent in 1996 to 2 per cent in 1998. Yet once that crisis had been contained, legitimate concern about the long-term drawbacks of globalization had given way to an unjustified complacency.

72. A series of structural problems must be addressed if globalization was to respond to the needs of the vast majority of developing countries. Balance-of-payments disorders remained as acute as ever for developing countries, whose economies were dependent on external financing in order to achieve the growth rate needed to tackle the problems of poverty and underdevelopment. Losses resulting from terms

of trade were no longer confined to commodity exports for the prices of manufactured goods exported by developing countries had also fallen. Liberalization of capital flows had made matters worse, leading to currency appreciation and instability and undermining trade performance.

73. Disproportionate attention to the rapid expansion of private capital flows to developing countries in the early 1990s had masked the fact that that upsurge was merely a return to the levels prevailing in 1975-1982, about 5 per cent of gross national product (GNP). Moreover, those flows had been concentrated on the same small group of 20 emerging markets as in the past. A recent study suggested that even the major increase in foreign direct investment in the 1990s was primarily a reflection of mergers and acquisitions rather than of new, productive investment.

74. Globalization had accentuated the extent to which economic success depended on the rapid acquisition of skills and on the effective use of information and technology. The *Human Development Report* 1999 showed that many developing countries lacked the infrastructure and other capacities needed to tap into the information and communications revolution. Furthermore, the international community must examine the continued viability of frameworks for the protection of intellectual property, ensuring a balance between the legitimate rights of owners and innovators to a secure and appropriate return on their investment and the larger social benefit that would result from wide, unrestricted knowledge flows. Ironically, under current WTO agreements, considerable protection was afforded to subsidies for research and development in the developed countries while subsidies in other sectors were discouraged.

75. On the eve of the new millennium, Member States had a historic opportunity to design not a level playing field, but an equitable one where all countries could be equipped to participate in the global race for development and prosperity.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.